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## *Old Mr. Tredgold.*<sup>1</sup>

A STORY OF TWO SISTERS.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

### CHAPTER XVII.

NOT only Sliplin, but the entire island was in commotion next day. Stella Tredgold had disappeared in the night, in her ball dress, which was the most startling detail, and seized the imagination of the community as nothing else could have done. Those of them who had seen her, so ridiculously overdressed for a girl of her age, sparkling with diamonds from head to foot, as some of these spectators said, represented to themselves with the dismayed delight of excitement that gleaming figure in the white satin dress which many people had remarked was like a wedding dress, the official apparel of a bride. In this wonderful garb she had stolen away down the dark private path from the Cliff to the beach, and got round somehow over the sands and rocks to the little harbour; and, while her sister was waiting for her on the cold cliff in the moonlight, had put out to sea and fled away—Stella the girl, and *Stella* the yacht—no one knew where. Was it her wedding dress, indeed? or had she, the misguided, foolish creature, flung herself into Charlie Somers's life without any safeguard, trusting to the honour of a man like that, who was a profligate and without honour, as everybody knew?

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1895, by M. O. W. Oliphant.

No one, however, except the most pessimistic—who always exist in every society, and think the worst, and alas! prove in so many cases right, because they always think the worst—believed in this. Indeed, it would be only right to say that nobody believed Stella to have run away to shame. There was a conviction in the general mind that a marriage licence, if not a marriage certificate, had certainly formed part of her baggage; and nobody expected that her father would be able to drag her back ‘by the hair of her head,’ as it was believed the furious old man intended to do. Mr. Tredgold’s fury passed all bounds, it was universally said. He had discharged a gun into the group on the lawn, who were searching for Stella in the shrubberies (*most absurd of them!*), and wounded, it was said, the gardener’s wife, who kept the lodge, and who had taken to her bed and made the worst of it, as such a person would naturally do. And then he had stood at the open window in his dressing-gown, shouting orders to the people as they appeared—always under the idea that burglars had got into the grounds.

‘Have the girls come back? Is Stella asleep? Don’t let them disturb my little Stella! Don’t let them frighten my pet,’ he had cried, while all the servants ran and bobbed about with lanterns and naked candles, flaring and blowing out, and not knowing what they were looking for. A hundred details were given of this scene, which no outsider had witnessed, which the persons involved were not conscious of, but which were nevertheless true. Even what Katherine said to her father crept out somehow, though certainly neither he nor she reported the details of that curious scene.

When she had a little organised the helpless body of servants and told them as far as she could think what to do—which was for half of them at least to go back to bed and keep quiet; when she had sent a man she could trust to make inquiries about the *Stella* at the pier, and another to fetch a doctor for the woman who considered herself to be dying, though she was, in fact, not hurt at all—and who made a diversion for which Katherine was thankful—she went indoors with Mrs. Simmons, the housekeeper, who was a person of some sense and not helpless in an emergency as the others were. And Mrs. Simmons had really something to tell. She informed Katherine as they went in together through the cold house, where the candles they carried made faintly visible the confusion of rooms abandoned for the night, with the ashes of last night’s fires in the grate, and last night’s occupations in

every chair carelessly pushed aside, and table heaped with newspapers and trifles—that she had been misdoubting as something was up with Stevens at least. Stevens was the point at which the story revealed itself to Mrs. Simmons. She had been holding her head very high, the little minx. She had been going on errands and carrying letters as nobody knew who they were to; and yesterday was that grand she couldn't contain herself, laughing and smiling to herself and dressed up in her very best. She had gone out quite early after breakfast on the day of the ball to get some bit of ribbon she wanted, but never came back till past twelve, when she came in the brougham with Miss Stella, and laughing so with her mistress in her room (you were out, Miss Katherine) as it wasn't right for a maid to be carrying on like that. And out again as soon as you young ladies was gone to the ball, and never come back, not so far as Mrs. Simmons knew. 'Oh, I've misdoubted as there was something going on,' the housekeeper said. Katherine, who was shivering in the dreadful chill of the house, in the dead of night, in the confusion of this sudden trouble, was too much depressed and sick at heart to ask why she had not been told of these suspicions. And then her father's voice calling to her was audible coming down the stairs. He stood at the head of the staircase, a strange figure in his dressing-gown and night-cap, with a candle held up in one hand and his old gun embraced in the other arm.

'Who's there?' he cried, staring down into the darkness. 'Who's there? Have you got 'em?—have you got 'em? Damn the fellows, and you too, for keeping me waitin'!' He was foaming at the mouth, or at least sending forth jets of moisture in his excitement. Then he gave vent to a sort of broken shout—'Kath-i-rine!' astonishment and sudden terror driving him out of familiarity into her formal name.

'Yes, papa, I am coming. Go back to your room. I will tell you everything—or, at least, all I know.' She was vaguely thankful in her heart that the doctor would be there, that there would be some one to fall back upon if it made him ill. Katherine seemed by this time to have all feeling deadened in her. If she could only have gone to her own room and lain down and forgotten everything—above all, that Stella was not there breathing softly within the ever-open door! She stopped a moment, in spite of herself, at the window on the landing which looked out upon the sea, and there, just rounding the white cliff, was that moving speck of whiteness sharing in the intense illumination of

the moonlight : which even as she looked disappeared, going out of sight in a minute as if it had been a cloud or a dream.

‘Have they got ’em, Katie? and what were you doing there at this time of night, out on the lawn in your—— George!’ cried the old man—‘in your ball finery? Have you just come back? Why, it’s near five in the morning. What’s the meaning of all this? Is Stella in her bed safe? And what in the name of wonder are you doing here?’

‘Papa,’ said Katherine in sheer disability to enter on the real subject, ‘you have shot the woman.’

‘Damn the woman!’ he cried.

‘And there were no burglars,’ she said with a sob. The cold, moral and physical, had got into her very soul. She drew her fur cloak more closely about her, but it seemed to give no warmth, and then she dropped upon her knees by the cold fireplace, in which, as in all the rest, there was nothing but the ashes of last night’s fire. Mr. Tredgold stood leaning on the mantel-piece, and he was cold too. He bade her tell him in a moment what was the matter, and what she had been doing out of the house at this hour of the night—with a tremulous roar.

‘Papa! oh, how can I tell you! It is Stella—Stella——’

‘What!’ he cried, ‘Stella ill? Stella ill? Send for the doctor. Call up Simmons. What is the matter with the child? Is it anything bad that you look so distracted? Good Lord—my Stella!’

‘Oh, have patience, sir,’ said Mrs. Simmons, coming in with wood to make a fire; ‘there’ll be news of her by the morning—sure there’ll be news by the morning. Miss Katherine have done everything. And the sea is just like a mill-pond, and her own gentleman to see to her——’

‘The sea?’ cried the old man. ‘What has the sea to do with my Stella?’ He aimed a clumsy blow at the housekeeper, kneeling in front of the fire, with the butt end of the gun he still had in his hand, in his unreflecting rage. ‘You old hag! what do you know about my Stella?’ he cried.

Mrs. Simmons did not feel the blow which Katherine diverted, but she was wounded all the same, and rose up with dignity, though not before she had made a cheerful blaze. ‘I meant to have brought you some tea, Miss Katherine: but if Master is going on with his abuse—— He did ought to think a little bit of *you* as are far more faithful. What do I know—more than that innocent lamb does, of all their goings on?’

'Katie,' cried Mr. Tredgold, 'put that wretched woman out by the shoulders. And why don't you go to your sister? Doesn't Stella go before everything? Have you sent for the doctor? Where's the doctor? And can't you tell me what is the matter with my child?'

'If I'm a wretched woman,' cried Mrs. Simmons, 'I ain't fit to be at the head of your servants, Mr. Tredgold; and I'm quite willing to go this day month, sir, for it's a hard place, though very likely better now Miss Stella's gone. As for Miss Stella, sir, it's no doctor, but maybe a clergyman as she is wanting; for she is off with her gentleman as sure as I am standing here.'

Mr. Tredgold gave an inarticulate cry, and felt vaguely for the gun which was still within his arm; but he missed hold of it and it fell on the floor, where the loaded barrel went off, scattering small shot into all the corners. Mrs. Simmons flew from the room with a conviction, which never left her, that she had been shot at—to meet the trembling household flocking from all quarters to know the meaning of this second report. Katherine, whose nerves were nearly as much shaken as those of Mrs. Simmons, and who could not shut out from her mind the sensation that some one must have been killed, shut the door quickly, she hardly knew why; and then she came back to her father, who was lying back very pale, and looking as if he were the person wounded, on the cushions of his great chair.

'What—what—does she mean?' he half said, half looked. 'Is—is—it true?'

'Oh, papa!' cried Katherine, kneeling before him, trying to take his hand. 'I am afraid, I am afraid——'

He pushed her off furiously. 'You—afraid!' Impossible to describe the scorn with which he repeated this word. 'Is it—is it true?'

Katherine could make no reply, and he wanted none, for thereupon he burst into a roar of oaths and curses which beat down her head like a hailstorm. She had never heard the like before, nor anything in the least resembling it. She tried to grasp at his hands, which he dashed into the air in his fury, right and left. She called out his name, pulled at his arm in the same vain effort. Then she sprang to her feet, crying out that she could not bear it—that it was a horror and a shame. Katherine's cloak fell from her; she stood, a vision of white, with her uncovered shoulders and arms, confronting the old man, who, with his face distorted like that of a demoniac, sat volleying forth curses and imprecations.



Katherine had never been so splendidly adorned as Stella, but a much smaller matter will make a girl look wonderful in all her whiteness, shining in the middle of the gloom against the background of heavy curtains and furniture, at such a moment of excitement and dismay. It startled the doctor as he came in, as with the effect of a scene in a play. And indeed he had a totally different impression of Katherine, who had always been kept a little in the shade of the brightness of Stella, from that day.

'Well,' he said, coming in, energetic but calm, into the midst of all this agitation, with a breath of healthful freshness out of the night, 'what is the matter here? I have seen the woman, Miss Katherine, and she is really not hurt at all. If it had touched her eyes, though, it might have been bad enough. Hullo! the gun again—gone off of itself this time, eh? I hope you are not hurt—nor your father.'

'We are in great trouble,' said Katherine. 'Papa has been very much excited. Oh, I am so glad—so glad you have come, doctor! Papa—'

'Eh? what's the matter? Come, Mr. Tredgold, you must get into bed—not a burglar about, I assure you, and the man on the alert. What do you say? Oh, come, come, my friend, you mustn't swear.'

To think he should treat as a jest that torrent of oaths that had made Katherine tremble and shrink more than anything else that had happened! It brought her, like a sharp prick, back to herself.

'Don't speak to me, d—— you,' cried the old man. 'D—— you all—d——'

'Yes,' said the doctor, 'cursed be the whole concern: I know—and a great relief to your mind, I shouldn't wonder. But now there's been enough of that and you must get to bed.'

He made Katherine a sign to go away, and she was thankful beyond expression to do so, escaping into her own room, where there was a fire, and where the head housemaid, very serious, waited to help her to undress—'As Stevens, you are aware, Miss Katherine, 'as gone away.' The door of the other room was open, the gleam of firelight visible within. Oh, was it possible—was it possible that Stella was not there, that she had gone away without a sign, out on the breadths of the moonlit sea, from whence she might never come again? Katherine had not realised this part of the catastrophe till now. 'I think I can manage by myself, Thompson,' she said faintly; 'don't let me keep you out of bed.'

'Oh, there's no question of bed now for us, Miss,' said Thompson with emphasis; 'it's only an hour or two earlier than usual, that's all. We'll get the more forwarder with our work: if any one can work, with messengers coming and going, and news arriving, and all this trouble about Miss Stella. I'm sure, for one, I couldn't close my eyes.'

Katherine vaguely wondered within herself if she were of more common clay than Thompson, as she had always been supposed to be of more common clay than her sister; for she felt that she would be very glad to close her eyes and forget for a moment all this trouble. She said in a faint voice, 'We do not know anything about Miss Stella, Thompson, as yet. She may have gone—up to Steephill with Lady Jane.'

'Oh, I know, Miss, very well where she's gone. She's gone to that big ship as sails to-morrow with all the soldiers. How she could do it, along of all those men, I can't think. I'm sure I couldn't do it,' cried Thompson. 'Oh, I had my doubts what all them notes and messages was coming to, and Stevens that proud she wouldn't speak a word to nobody. Well, I always thought as Stevens was your maid, Miss Katherine, as you're the eldest; but I don't believe she have done a thing for you.'

'Oh, she has done all I wanted. I don't like very much attendance. Now that you have undone these laces, you may go. Thank you very much, Thompson, but I really do not want anything more.'

'I'll go and get you some tea, Miss Katherine,' the woman said. Another came to the door before she had been gone a minute. They were all most eager to serve the remaining daughter of the house—and to try to pick up a scrap of news, or to state their own views at the same time. This one put in her head at the door and said in a hoarse confidential whisper, 'Andrews could tell more about it than most, Miss, if you'd get hold of him.'

'Andrews!' said Katherine.

'He always said he was Miss Stella's man: and he's drove her a many places—oh, a many places—as you never knowed of. You just ast him where he took her yesterday mornin', Miss.'

At this point Thompson came back, and drove the other skurrying away.

When Katherine returned, in the warm dressing-gown which was so comfortable, wrapping her round like a friend, to her father's room, she found the old man in bed, very white and

tremulous after his passion, but quiet, though his lips still moved and his cruel little red eyes shone. Katherine had never known before that they were cruel eyes, but the impression came upon her now with a force that made her shiver; they were like the eyes of a wild creature, small and impotent, which would fain have killed but could not—with a red glare in them, unwinking, fixed, full of malice and fury. The doctor explained to her, standing by the fireplace, what he had done; while Katherine, listening, saw across the room those fiery small eyes watching the conversation as if they could read what it was in her face. She could not take her own eyes away, nor refuse to be investigated by that virulent look.

‘I have given him a strong composing draught. He’ll go to sleep presently, and the longer he sleeps the better. He has got his man with him, which is the best thing for him; and now about you, Miss Katherine.’ He took her hand with that easy familiarity of the medical man which his science authorises, and in which there is often as much kindness as science. ‘What am I to do for you?’

‘Oh, nothing, doctor! unless you can suggest something. Oh, doctor, it is of no use trying to conceal it from you—my sister is gone!’ She melted suddenly, not expecting them at all, thinking herself incapable of them—into tears.

‘I know, I know,’ he said. ‘It is a great shock for you, it is very painful; but if, as I hear, he was violently against the marriage, and she was violently determined on it, was not something of the kind to be expected? You know your sister was very much accustomed to her own way.’

‘Oh, doctor, how can you say that!—as if you took it for granted—as if it was not the most terrible thing that could happen! Eloped, only imagine it! Stella! in her ball dress, and with that man!’

‘I hope there is nothing very bad about the man,’ said the doctor with hesitation.

‘And how are we to get her back? The ship sails to-morrow. If she is once carried away in the ship she will never, never—Oh, doctor, can I go? who can go? What can we do? Do tell me something, or I will go out of my senses,’ she cried.

‘Is there another room where we can talk? I think he is going to sleep,’ said the doctor.

Katherine, in her distress, had got beyond the power of the terrible eyes on the bed, which still gleamed, but fitfully. Her

father did not notice her as she went out of the room. And by this time the whole house was astir and fires were being lighted in all the rooms—to relieve the minds of the servants, it is to be supposed, for nobody knew why. The tray that had been carried to her room was brought downstairs, and there by the perturbed fire of a winter morning, burning with preternatural vigilance and activity as if eager to find out what caused all this commotion, she poured out the hot tea for the doctor, and he ate bread and butter with the most wholesome and hearty appetite—which was again a very curious scene.

The Tredgolds were strangely without friends. There was no uncle, no intimate to refer to, who might come and take the lead in such an emergency. Unless Katherine could have conducted such inquiries herself, or sent a servant, there was no one nearer than the doctor, or perhaps the vicar, who had always been so friendly. He and she decided between them that the doctor should go off at once, or at least as soon as there was a train to take him, to the great ship which was to embark the regiment early that morning, to discover whether Sir Charles Somers was there; while the vicar, whom he could see and inform in the meantime, should investigate the matter at home and at Steep-hill. The gardener, a trustworthy man, had, as soon as his wife was seen to be 'out of danger,' as they preferred to phrase it—'scarcely hurt at all,' as the doctor said—been sent off to trace the *Stella*, driving in a dog-cart to Bembridge, which was the nearest port she was likely to put in at. By noon the doctor thought they would certainly have ascertained among them, all that was likely to be ascertained. He tried to comfort Katherine's mind by an assurance that no doubt there would be a marriage, that Somers, though he had not a good character, would never—but stopped with a kind of awe, perceiving that Katherine had no suspicion of the possibility of any other ending, and condemning himself violently as a fool for putting any such thought into her head; but he had not put any such thought in her head, which was incapable of it. She had no conception of anything that could be worse than the elopement. He hastened to take refuge in something she did understand. 'All this on one condition,' he said, 'that you go to bed and try to sleep. I will do nothing unless you promise this: and you can do nothing for your sister. There is nothing to be done; gazing out over the sea won't bring the yacht back. You must promise me that you will try to go to sleep. You will if you try.'

'Oh yes, I will go to sleep,' Katherine said. She reflected again that she was of commoner clay than Thompson, who could not have closed an eye.

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### CHAPTER XVIII.

It proved not at all difficult to find out everything, or almost everything, about the runaway pair. The doctor's mission, though it seemed likely to be the most important of all, did not produce very much. In the bustle of the embarkation he had found it difficult to get any information at all, but eventually he had found Captain Scott, whom he had attended during his illness, and whom he now sent peremptorily down below out of the cold. 'If that's your duty, you must not do it, that's all,' he had said with the decision of a medical man, though whether he had secured his point or not, Katherine, ungratefully indifferent to Algy, did not ascertain. But he found that Sir Charles Somers had got leave and was going out with a P. and O. from Brindisi to join his regiment when it should reach India.

'It will cost him the eyes out of his head,' Algy said. 'Lucky beggar, he don't mind what he spends now.'

'Why?' the doctor asked, and was laughed at for not knowing that Charlie had run off with old Tredgold's daughter, who was good for any amount of money, and, of course, would soon give in and receive the pair back again into favour. 'Are you so sure of that?' the doctor said. And Algy had replied that his friend would be awfully up a tree if it didn't turn out so. The doctor shook his head in relating this story to Katherine. 'I have my doubts,' he said; but she knew nothing on that subject, and was thinking of nothing but of Stella herself, and the dreadful thought that she might see her no more.

The vicar, on his side, had been busy with his inquiries too, and he had found out everything with the greatest ease; in the first place from Andrews, the young coachman, who declared that he had always taken his orders from Miss Stella, and didn't know as he was doing no wrong. Andrews admitted very frankly that he had driven his young mistress to the little church, one of the very small primitive churches of the island, near Steephill, where the tall gentleman with the dark moustaches had met her, and

where Miss Stevens had turned up with a big basketful of white chrysanthemums. They had been in the church about half an hour, and then they had come out again, and Miss Stevens and the young lady had got into the brougham. The chrysanthemums had been for the decoration of the ballroom, as everybody knew. Then he had taken Miss Stevens to meet the last train for Ryde ; and then he had driven his young ladies home with the same gentleman on the box who had got down at the gate : finally Andrews had picked up Miss Stella and the gentleman at the Cliff door, and had driven them to the pier : nothing could be more exact. The vicar had gone on upon this in search of information to Steephill Church, and found that the old rector there, in the absence of the curate—he himself being almost past duty by reason of old age—had married one of the gentlemen living at the Castle to a young lady whose name he could not recollect further than that it was Stella. The old gentleman had thought it all right as it was a gentleman from the Castle, and he had a special licence, which made everything straight. The register of the marriage was all right in the books, as the vicar had taken care to see. Of course it was all right in the books ! Katherine was much surprised that they should all make such a point of that, as if anything else was to be thought of. What did it matter about the register ? The thing was that Stella had run away, that she was gone, that she had betrayed their trust in her, and been a traitor to her home.

But a girl is not generally judged very hardly when she runs away ; it is supposed to be her parents' fault or her lover's fault, and she but little to blame. But when Katherine thought of her vigil on the cliff, her long watch in the moonlight, without a word of warning or farewell, she did not think that Stella was so innocent. Her heart was very sore and wounded by the desertion. The power of love indeed ! Was there no love, then, but one ? Did her home count for nothing, where she had always been so cherished ; nor her father, who had loved her so dearly ; nor her sister, who had given up everything to her ? Oh no ; perhaps the sister didn't matter ! But at least her father, who could not bear that she should want anything upon which she had set her heart ! Katherine's heart swelled at the thought of all Stella's contrivances to escape in safety. She had carried all her jewels with her, those jewels which she had partly acquired as the price of abandoning Sir Charles. Oh, the treachery, the treachery of it ! She could scarcely keep her countenance while the gentlemen came with their reports. She felt her features distorted with the effort to



show nothing but sorrow, and to thank them quietly for all the trouble they had taken. She would have liked to stamp her foot, to dash her clenched hands into the air, almost to utter those curses which had burst from her father. What a traitor she had been! What a traitor! She was glad to get the men out of the house, who were very kind, and wanted to do more if she would let them, to do anything—and especially to return and communicate to Mr. Tredgold the result of their inquiries when he woke from his long sleep. Katherine said No, no, she would prefer to tell him herself. There seemed to be but one thing she desired, and that was to be left alone.

After this hot fit there came, as was natural, a cold one. Katherine went upstairs to her own room, the room divided from that other only by an open door, which they had occupied ever since they were children. Then her loneliness came down upon her like a pall. Even with the thrill of this news in all her frame, she felt a foolish impulse to go and call Stella—to tell Stella all about it, and hear her hasty opinion. Stella never hesitated to give her opinion, to pronounce upon every subject that was set before her with rapid, unhesitating decisions. She would have known exactly what to say on this subject. She would have taken the girl's part; she would have asked what right a man had because he was your father to be such a tyrant. Katherine could hear the very tone in which she would have condemned the unnatural parent, and see the indignant gesture with which she would have lifted her head. And now there was nobody, nothing but silence; the room so vacant, the trim bed so empty and cold and white. It was like a bed of death, and Katherine shivered. The creature so full of impulses and hasty thoughts and crude opinions and life and brightness would never be there again. No, even if papa would forgive—even if he would receive her back, there would be no Stella any more. This would not be her place; the sisterly companionship was broken, and life could never more be what it had been.

She sat down on the floor in the middle of the desolation and cried bitterly. What should she do without Stella? Stella had always been the first to think of everything; the suggestion of what to do or say had always been in her hands. Katherine did not deny to herself that she had often thought differently from Stella, that she had not always accepted either her suggestions or her opinions; but that was very different from the silence, the absence of that clear, distinct, self-assured little voice, the mind



made up so instantaneously, so ready to pronounce upon every subject. Even in this way of looking at it, it will be seen that she was no blind admirer of her sister. She knew her faults as well as anyone. Faults! she was made up of faults—but she was Stella all the same.

She had cried all her tears out, and was still sitting intent, with her sorrowful face, motionless, in the reaction of excitement, upon the floor, when Simmons, the housekeeper, opened the door, and looked round for her, calling at last in subdued tones, and starting much to see the lowly position in which her young mistress was. Simmons came attended by the little jingle of a cup and spoon, which had been so familiar in the ears of the girls in all their little childish illnesses, when Simmons with the beef-tea or the arrowroot, or whatever it might be, was a change and a little amusement to them, in the dreadful vacancy of a day in bed. Mrs. Simmons, though she was a great personage in the house and (actually) ordered the dinners and ruled over everything, notwithstanding any fond illusions that Katherine might cherish on that subject—had never delegated this care to anyone else, and Katherine knew very well what was going to be said.

‘Miss Katherine, dear, sit up now and take this nice beef-tea. I’ve seen it made myself, and it’s just as good as I know how. And you must take something if you’re ever to get up your strength. Sit up, now, and eat it as long as it’s nice and hot—do!’ The address was at once persuasive, imploring, and authoritative. ‘Sit up, now, Miss Katherine—do!’

‘Oh, Simmons, it isn’t beef-tea I want this time,’ she said, stumbling hastily to her feet.

‘No,’ Simmons allowed with a sigh: ‘but you want your strength kep’ up, and there’s nothing so strengthening. It’ll warm you too. It’s a very cold morning and there’s no comfort in the house—not a fire burning as it ought to, not a bit of consolation nowhere. We can’t all lay down and die, Miss Katherine, because Miss Stella, bless her, has married a very nice gentleman. He ain’t to your papa’s liking, more’s the pity, and sorry I am in many ways, for a wedding in the house is a fine thing, and such a wedding as Miss Stella’s, if she had only pleased your papa! It would have been a sight to see. But, dear, a young lady’s fancy is not often the same as an old gentleman’s, Miss Katherine. We must all own to that. They thinks of one thing and the young lady, bless her, she thinks of another. It’s human nature. Miss Stella’s pleased herself, she hasn’t pleased Master. Well, we can’t

change it, Miss Katherine, dear; but she's very 'appy, I don't make a doubt of it, for I always did say as Sir Charles was a very taking man. Lord bless us, just to think of it! I am a-calling her Miss Stella, and it's my Lady she is, bless her little heart!'

Though she despised herself for it, this gave a new turn to Katherine's thoughts too. Lady Somers! yes, that was what Stella was now. That little title, though it was not an exalted one, would have an effect upon the general opinion, however lofty might be the theories expressed, as to the insignificance of rank. Rank; it was the lowest grade of anything that could be called rank. And yet it would have a certain effect on the general mind. She was even conscious of feeling it herself, notwithstanding both the indignation and the sorrow in her mind. 'My sister, Lady Somers!' Was it possible that she could say it with a certain pleasure, as if it explained more or less now (a question which had always been so difficult) who the Tredgolds were, and what they were worth in the island. Now Katherine suddenly realised that people would say, 'One of the daughters married Sir Charles Somers.' It would be acknowledged that in that case the Tredgolds might be people to know. Katherine's pride revolted, yet her judgment recognised the truth of this. And she wondered involuntarily how it might affect her father—if he would think of that?

'Is my father awake yet, Simmons?' she asked.

'Beginning to stir, Miss Katherine, Dolby said. How clever they are, them doctors, with their sleeping draffs and things! Oh, I'm quite opposed to 'em. I don't think as it's right to force sleep or anything as is contrary to the Almighty's pleasure. But to be such nasty stuff, the effeck it do have is wonderful. Your papa, as was so excited like and ready to shoot all of us, right and left, he has slep' like a baby all these hours. And waking up now, Dolby says, like a lamb, and ready for his breakfast.'

'I must go to him at once, Simmons,' cried Katherine, thrusting back into Simmons's hand the cup and the spoon.

'You won't do nothing of the sort, Miss, if so be as you'll be guided by me. He'll not think of it just at once, and he'll eat his breakfast, which will do him a lot of good, and if he don't see you, why, he'll never remember as anything's up. And then when he comes to think, Dolby will call you, Miss Katherine, if the doctor isn't here first, which would be the best way.'

'I think I ought to go to him at once,' Katherine said. But she did not do so. It was no pleasant task. His looks when he burst forth into those oaths and curses (though she had herself

felt not very long ago as if to do the same might have been a relief to her surcharged and sickened soul), and when he lay, with his keen, small eyes gleaming red with passion, in his bed, looking at her, came back to her with a shudder. Perhaps she had not a very elevated ideal of a father. The name did not imply justice or even tenderness to her mind. Katherine was well aware that he had never done her justice all her life. He had been kind—enough; but his kindness had been very different from the love he had shown to Stella. He had elevated the younger sister over the elder since ever the children had known how to distinguish between good and evil. But still he was papa. It might be that an uneasy feeling that she was not proud of her father had visited the girl's mind more than once, when she saw him among other men; but still he was papa just as Stella was Stella, and therefore like no one else, whatever they might say or do. She did not like to go to him again, to renew his misery and her own, to hear him curse the girl whom he had adored, to see that dreadful look as if of a fiend in his face. Her own feelings had fallen into a sort of quietude now by means of exhaustion, and of the slow, slow moments, which felt every one of them as if it were an hour.

It was some time longer before she was called. Mr. Tredgold had got up; he had made his toilet, and gone down to his sitting-room, which communicated with his bedroom by a little private staircase. And it was only when he was there that his eyes fell on his clock, and he cried with a start:

'Half-past twelve, and I just come downstairs! What does this mean—what does it mean? Why wasn't I called at the right time?'

'You had a—a restless night, sir,' said the man, trembling. ('Oh, where's that Miss Katherine, where's that young person?' he said to himself.)

'A restless night! And why had I a restless night? No supper, eh? Never eat supper now. Girls won't let me. Hollo! I begin to remember. Wasn't there an alarm of burglars? And none of you heard, you deaf fools; nobody but me, an old man! I let go one barrel at them, eh? Enough to send them all flying. Great fun that. And then Katherine, Katherine—what do I remember about Katherine? Stopped me before I could do anything, saying there was nobody. Fool, to mind what she said; quite sure there was somebody, eh? Can't you tell me what it was?'

'Don't know, indeed, sir,' said the man, whose teeth were chattering with fear.

'Don't know, indeed! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Speak out, you fool. Was it burglars——'

'No, sir. I think not, sir. I—don't know what it was, sir. Something about Miss—— about Miss——'

'About whom?' the old man cried.

'Oh, sir, have a little patience—it's all right, it's all right, sir—just Miss Stella, sir, that—that is all right, sir—all safe, sir,' the attendant cried.

Old Tredgold sat upright in his chair; he put his elbows on the table to support his head. 'Miss Stella!' he said with a sudden hoarseness in his voice.

And then the man rushed out to summon Katherine, who came quietly but trembling to the call.

He uncovered his face as she came in. It was ghastly pale, the two gleaming points of the eyes glimmering out of it like the eyes of a wild beast. 'Stella, Stella?' he said hoarsely, and, seizing Katherine by the arm, pressed her down upon a low chair close to him. 'What's all this cock and a bull story?' he said.

'Oh, papa!'

He seized her again and shook her in his fury. 'Speak out or I'll—I'll kill you,' he cried.

Her arm was crushed as in an iron vice. Body and soul she trembled before him. 'Papa, let me go or I can say nothing! Let me go!'

He gave her arm one violent twist and then he dropped it. 'What are you afraid of?' he said, with a gleam of those angry eyes. 'Go on—go on—tell me what happened last night.'

Katherine's narrative was confused and broken, and Mr. Tredgold was not usually a man of very clear intelligence. It must have been that his recollections, sent into the background of his mind by the extreme shock of last night, and by the opiate which had helped him to shake it off, had all the time been working secretly within him through sleeping and waking, waiting only for the outer framework of the story now told him. He understood every word. He took it all up point by point, marking them by the beating of his hand upon the arm of his chair. 'That's how it was,' he said several times, nodding his head. He was much clearer about it than Katherine, who did not yet realise the sequence of events or that Stella was already Charlie Somers's wife when she came innocently back with her white flowers, and hung about her father at his luncheon, doing everything possible to please him; but he perceived all this without the

hesitation of a moment and with apparent composure. 'It was all over, then,' he said to himself; 'she had done it, then. She took us in finely, you and me, Kate. We are a silly lot—to believe what everyone tells us. She was married to her fine gentleman before she came in to us all smiling and pleasant;' and then, speaking in the same even tone, he suddenly cursed her, without even a pause to distinguish the words.

'Papa, papa!' Katherine cried, almost with a shriek.

'What is it, you little fool? You think perhaps I'll say "Bless you, my children," and have them back? They think so themselves, I shouldn't wonder; they'll find out the difference. What about those diamonds that I gave her instead of him—instead of——' And here he laughed, and in the same steady tone bade God curse her again.

'I cannot hear you say that—I cannot, I cannot! Oh, God bless and take care of my poor Stella! Oh, papa, little Stella, that you have always been so fond of——'

Mr. Tredgold's arm started forth as if it would have given a blow. He dashed his fist in the air, then subsided again and laughed a low laugh. 'I shan't pay for those diamonds,' he said. 'I'll send them back, I'll—— And her new clothes that she was to get—God damn her. She can't have taken her clothes, flying off from a ball by night.'

'Oh, what are clothes, or money, or anything, in comparison with Stella?' Katherine said.

'Not much to you that don't have to pay for them,' he said. 'I shan't pay for them. Go and pack up the rags, don't you hear? and bring me the diamonds. She thinks we'll send 'em after her.' And here the curse again. 'She shan't have one of them, not one. Go and do what I tell you, Katie. God damn her and her——'

'Oh, papa, for the sake of everything that is good! Yes, I will go—I will go. What does it matter? Her poor little frocks, her——'

'They cost a deal of money all the same. And bring me the diamonds,' Mr. Tredgold said.

And then there suddenly flashed upon Katherine a strange revelation, a ludicrous tragic detail which did not seem laughable to her, yet was so—— 'The diamonds,' she said, faltering, half turning back on her way to the door.

'Well! the diamonds?'

'Oh, forgive her, forgive her! She never could have thought

of that ; she never could have meant it. Papa, for God's sake, forgive her, and don't say—*that* again. She was wearing them all at the ball. She was in her ball dress. She had no time to change—she——'

He seized and shook her savagely as if she had been confessing a theft of her own, and then rose up with his habitual chuckle in his throat. 'George! she's done me,' he said. 'She's got her fortune on her back. She's—she's a chip of the old block, after all.' He dropped down again heavily in his chair, and then with a calm voice, looking at Katherine, said tranquilly, 'God damn her' once more.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

It was afterwards discovered that Stella had calculated her elopement in a way which justified most perfectly the unwilling applause elicited from her father—that she was a chip of the old block. She had over-decorated herself, as had been remarked, it now appeared, by everybody at the ball, on the night of her flight, wearing all the diamonds she had got from her father as an equivalent for her lover—and other things besides, everything she had that was valuable. It was ridiculous enough to see a girl blazing in all those diamonds ; but to have her pearl necklace as well, adjusted as an ornament on her bodice, and bracelets enough to go up almost to the elbow, was more absurd still, and Katherine, it now appeared, was the only person who had not observed this excess of jewellery. She remembered now vaguely that she had felt Stella to be more radiant, more dazzling than ever, and had wondered with a sort of dull ache whether it was want of heart, whether it was over-excitement, or what it was which made her sister's appearance and aspect so brilliant on the very eve of her parting from her lover. 'Partings which press the life from out young hearts.' How was it possible that she could be so bright, so gay, so full of life, and he going away ? She had felt this, but she had not noticed, which was strange, the extraordinary number of Stella's bracelets, or the manner in which her pearls were fastened upon the bosom of her dress. This was strange, but due chiefly perhaps to the fact that Stella had not shown herself, as usual, for her sister's admiration before starting, but had appeared in a hurry rather late, and already wrapped in her cloak.



It was found, however, on examining her drawers, that Stella had taken everything she had which was of any value. It was also discovered later that she had taken advantage of her father's permission to get as many new frocks as she pleased—always to make up for the loss of Charlie—by ordering for herself an ample *trousseau*, which had been sent to await her to a London hotel. She had all these things now and the lover too, which was so brilliant a practical joke that it kept the regiment in laughter for a year; but was not so regarded at home, though Mr. Tredgold himself was not able to refrain from a certain admiration when he became fully aware of it, as has been seen. It afflicted Katherine, however, with a dull, enduring pain in the midst of her longing for her sister and her sense of the dreadful vacancy made by Stella's absence. The cheerful calculation, the amused and merry looks with which Stella had hid all her wiles and preparations gave her sister a pang, not acute but profound—a constant ache which took away all the spring of her life. Even when she tried to escape from it, making to herself all those *banal* excuses which are employed in such circumstances—about love, to which everything is permitted, and the lover's entreaties, to which nothing can be refused, and the fact that she had to live her own life, not another's, and was obeying the voice of Nature in choosing for herself—all these things, which Katherine presented to herself as consolations, were over and over again refused by her better judgment. If Stella had run away in her little white frock and garden hat, her sister could have forgiven her; but the *trousseau*, the maid, the diamonds, even the old pearls which had been given to both of them—her own share of which still remained the chief of Katherine's possessions—that Stella should have settled and arranged all that was more than Katherine could bear. She locked away her own pearls, with what she felt afterwards to be a very absurd sentiment, and vowed that she would never wear them again. There seemed a sort of insult in the addition of that girlish decoration to all the other stolen ornaments. But this, the reader will perceive, was very high-flown on Katherine's part.

A day or two after this tremendous crisis, which, I need not say, was by far the most delightful public event which had occurred in Sliplin for centuries, and which moved the very island to its centre, Lady Jane called with solemnity at the Cliff. Lady Jane was better dressed on this occasion than I believe she had ever been seen to be in the memory of men. She was attired

in black brocade with a train, and wore such a mantle as everybody said must have been got for the occasion, since it was like nothing that had ever been seen on Lady Jane's shoulders before. The furs, too, were unknown to Sliplin; perhaps she wore them in more favoured places, perhaps she had borrowed them for the occasion. The reason of all this display was beyond the divination of Katherine, who received her visitor half with the suppressed resentment which she felt she owed to everyone who could be supposed privy to Stella's plans, and half with the wistful longing for an old friend, a wiser and more experienced person, to console herself. Katherine had abandoned the young ladies' room, with all its double arrangements and suggestions of a life that was over. She sat in the large drawing-room, among the costly, crowded furniture, feeling as if, though less expensive, she was but one of them—a daughter needed, like the Italian cabinets, for the due furnishing of the house.

Lady Jane came in, feeling her way between the chairs and tables. It was appropriate that so formal a visit should be received in this formal place. She shook hands with Katherine, who held back visibly from the usual unnecessary kiss. It marked at once the difference, and that the younger woman felt herself elevated by her resentment, and was no longer to be supposed to be in any way at Lady Jane's feet.

'How do you do?' said Lady Jane, carrying out the same idea. 'How is your father? I am glad to hear that he has, on the whole, not suffered in health—nor you either, Katherine, I hope?'

'I don't know about suffering in health. I am well enough,' the girl said.

'I perceive,' said Lady Jane, 'by your manner that you identify me somehow with what has happened. That is why I have come here to-day. You must feel I don't come as I usually do. In ordinary circumstances I should probably have sent for you to come to me. Katherine, I can see that you think I'm somehow to blame—in what way, I'm sure I don't know.'

'I have never expressed any blame. I don't know that I have ever thought anyone was to blame—except——'

'Except?—except themselves. You are right. They are very hot-headed, the one as much as the other. I don't mean to say that he—he is a sort of relation of mine—has not asked my advice. If he has done so once he has done it a hundred times, and I can assure you, Katherine, all that I have said has been

consistently "Don't ask me." I have told him a hundred times that I would not take any responsibility. I have said to him, "I can't tell how you will suit each other, or whether you will agree, or anything." I have had nothing to do with it. I felt, as he was staying in my house at the time, that you or your father might be disposed to blame me. I assure you it would be very unjust. I knew no more of what was going on on Wednesday last—no more than—than Snap did,' cried Lady Jane. Snap was the little tyrant of the fields at Steephill, a small fox terrier, and kept everything under his control.

'I can only say that you have never been blamed, Lady Jane. Papa has never mentioned your name, and as for me——'

'Yes, Katherine, you; it is chiefly you I think of. I am sure you have thought I had something to do with it.'

Katherine made a pause. She was in a black dress. I can scarcely tell why—partly, perhaps, from some exaggerated sentiment—actually because Mrs. Simmons, who insisted on attending to her till someone could be got to replace Stevens, had laid it out:—and she was unusually pale. She had not in reality 'got over' the incident so well as people appeared to hope.

'To tell the truth,' she said, 'all the world has seemed quite insignificant to me except my sister. I have had so much to do thinking of her that I have had no time for anything else.'

'That's not very complimentary to people that have taken so great an interest in you.' Lady Jane was quite discomposed by having the word insignificant applied to her. She was certainly not insignificant, whatever else she might be.

'Perhaps it is not,' Katherine said. 'I have had a great deal to think of,' she added with a half appeal for sympathy.

'I dare say. Is it possible that you never expected it? Didn't you see—that night? All those jewels even might have told their story. I confess that I was vaguely in a great fright; but I thought you must have been in her confidence, Katherine, that is the truth.'

'I in her confidence! Did you think I would have helped her to—to—deceive everybody? to—give such a blow to papa?'

'Is it such a blow to your papa? I am told he has not suffered in health. Now I look at you again you are pale: but I don't suppose you have suffered in health either. Katherine, don't you think you are overdoing it a little? She has done nothing that is so very criminal. And your own conduct was a

little strange. You let her run off into the dark shrubberies to say farewell to him, as I am told, and never gave any alarm till you saw the yacht out in the bay, and must have known they were safe from any pursuit. I must say that a girl who has behaved like that is much more likely to have known all about it than an outsider like me!’

‘I did not know anything about it,’ cried Katherine—‘nothing! Stella did not confide in me. If she had done so—if she had told me——’

‘Yes; what would you have done then?’ Lady Jane asked with a certain air of triumph.

Katherine looked blankly at her. She was wandering about in worlds not realised. She had never asked herself that question. And yet perhaps her own conduct, her patience in that moonlight scene was more extraordinary in her ignorance than it would have been had she sympathised and known. The question took her breath away, and she had no answer to give.

‘If she had told you that she had been married to Charlie Somers that morning; that he was starting for India next day; that whatever her duty to her father and yourself might have been (that’s nonsense; a girl has no duty to her sister), her duty to her husband came first then. If she had told you that at the last moment, Katherine, what would you have done?’

Katherine felt every possibility of reply taken from her. What could she have done? Supposing Stella that night—that night in the moonlight, which somehow seemed mixed up with everything—had whispered *that* in her ear, instead of the lie about wishing to bid Charlie farewell. What could she have done? what would she have done? With a gasp in her throat she looked helplessly at her questioner. She had no answer to make.

‘Then how could you blame me?’ cried Lady Jane, throwing off her wonderful furs, loosening her mantle, beginning, with her dress tucked up a little in front, to look more like herself. ‘What was to be done when they had gone and taken it into their own hands? You can’t separate husband and wife, though, Heaven knows, there are a great many that would be too thankful if you could. But there they were—married. What was to be done? I made sure when you would insist on driving home with her, Katherine, that she must have told you.’

‘I was not expected, then, to drive home with her?’ Katherine said sharply. ‘It was intended that I should know nothing—nothing at all.’

'I thought—I sincerely thought,' said Lady Jane, hanging her head a little, 'that she would have told you then. I suppose she was angry at the delay.'

Katherine's heart was very sore. She had been the one who knew nothing, from whom everything had been kept. It had been intended that she should be left at the ball while Stella stole off with her bridegroom; and her affectionate anxiety about Stella's headache had been a bore, the greatest bore, losing so much time and delaying the escape. And shut up there with her sister, her closest friend, her inseparable companion of so many years, there had not been even a whisper of the great thing which had happened, which now stood between them and cut them apart for ever. Katherine, in her life which had been that of a secondary person, the always inferior, had learned unconsciously a great deal of self-repression; but it taxed all her powers to receive this blow full on her breast and make no sign. Her lips quivered a little; she clasped her hands tightly together; and a hot and heavy moisture, which made everything awry and changed, stood in her eyes.

'Was that how it was?' she said at last when she had controlled her voice to speak.

'Katherine, dear child, I can't tell you how sorry I am. Nobody thought that you would feel it——' Lady Jane added after a moment, 'so much,' and put out her hand to lay it on Katherine's tightly-clasped hands.

'Nobody thought of me, I imagine, at all,' said Katherine, withdrawing from this touch, and recovering herself after that bitter and blinding moment. 'It would have been foolish to expect anything else. And it is perhaps a good thing that I was not tried—that I was not confided in. I might perhaps have thought of my duty to my father. But a woman who is married,' she added quickly, with an uncontrollable bitterness, 'has, I suppose, no duties, except to the man whom—who has married her.'

'He must always come first,' said Lady Jane with a little solemnity. She was thunderstruck when Katherine, rising quickly to her feet and walking about the room, gave vent to Brabantio's exclamation before the Venetian senators:

'Look to her, thou: have a quick eye to see.  
She hath deceived her father and may thee.'

Lady Jane was not an ignorant woman for her rank and position. She had read the necessary books, and kept up a kind

of speaking acquaintance with those of the day. But it may be excused to her, a woman of many occupations, if she did not remember whence this outburst came and thought it exceedingly ridiculous and indeed of very doubtful taste, if truth must be told.

‘I could not have thought you would be so merciless,’ she said severely. ‘I thought you were a kind creature, almost too kind. It is easy to see that you have never been touched by any love-affair of your own.’

Katherine laughed—there seemed no other reply to this assumption—and came back and sat down quietly in her chair.

‘Was that all, Lady Jane?’ she said. ‘You came to tell me you had nothing to do with the step my sister has taken, and then that you knew all about it, and that it was only I who was left out.’

‘You are a very strange girl, Katherine Tredgold. I excuse you because no doubt you have been much agitated, otherwise I should say you were very rude and impertinent.’ Lady Jane was gathering on again her panoply of war—her magnificent town-mantle, the overwhelming furs which actually belonged to her maid. ‘I knew nothing about the first step,’ she said angrily. ‘I was as ignorant of the marriage as you were. Afterwards, I allow, they told me; and as there was nothing else to be done—for, of course, as you confess, a woman as soon as she is married has no such important duty as to her husband—I did not oppose the going away. I advised them to take you into their confidence; afterwards, I allow, for their sakes, I promised to keep you engaged, if possible, to see that you had plenty of partners and no time to think.’

Katherine was ashamed afterwards to remember how the prick of injured pride stung her more deeply than even that of wounded affection. ‘So,’ she said, her cheeks glowing crimson, ‘it was to your artifice that I owed my partners! But I have never found it difficult to get partners—without your aid, Lady Jane!’

‘You will take everything amiss, however one puts it,’ said Lady Jane. And then there was a long pause, during which that poor lady struggled much with her wraps without any help from Katherine, who sat like a stone and saw her difficulties without lifting so much as a little finger. ‘You are to be excused,’ the elder lady added, ‘for I do not think you have been very well treated: though, to be sure, poor Stella must have felt there was



very little sympathy likely, or she certainly would have confided in you. As for Charlie Somers ——' Lady Jane gave an expressive wave of her hand, as if consenting that nothing was to be expected from him; then she dropped her voice and said with a change of tone, 'I don't see why it should make any difference between you and me, Katherine. I have really had nothing to do with it—except at the very last. Tell me now, dear, how your father takes it. Is he very much displeased?'

'Displeased is a weak word, Lady Jane.'

'Well, angry then—enraged—any word you like; of course, for the moment no word will be strong enough.'

'I don't think,' said Katherine, 'that he will ever allow her to enter his house, or consent to see her again.'

'Good Heavens!' cried Lady Jane. 'Then what in the world is to become of them? But I am sure you exaggerate—in the heat of the moment; and, of course, Katherine, I acknowledge you have been very badly used,' she said.

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## CHAPTER XX.

KATHERINE was perhaps not in very good condition after Lady Jane's visit, though that great personage found it, on the whole, satisfactory, and felt that she had settled the future terms on which they were to meet in quite a pleasant way—to receive the first letter which Stella sent her, an epistle which arrived a day or two later. Stella's epistle was very characteristic indeed. It was dated from Paris:

'Dearest Kate,—I can't suppose that you have not heard everything about all that we have done and haven't done. I don't excuse myself for not writing on the plea that you couldn't possibly be anxious about me, as you must have known all this by next morning, but I can't help feeling that you must have been angry, both you and papa, and I thought it would perhaps be better just to let you cool down. I know you have cause to be angry, dear; I ought to have told you, and it was on my lips all the time; but I thought you might think it your duty to make a row, and then all our plans might have been turned upside down. What we had planned to do was to get across to Southsea in the yacht, and go next morning by the first train to London, and

on here at once—which, with a few changes, we carried out. You see we have never been to say out of reach; but it would have done you no good to try to stop us, for, of course, from the moment I was Charlie's wife my place was with him. I know you never would have consented to such a marriage; but it is perfectly all right, I can assure you—as good as if it had come off in St. George's, Hanover Square. And we have had a delightful time. Stevens met me at Southsea with the few things I wanted (apologies for taking her from you, but you never made so much use of her as I did, and I don't think you ever cared for Stevens), and next day we picked up our things in London. I wish you could see my things, they are beautiful. I hope papa won't be dreadfully angry that I took him at his word; and I'm quite frightened sometimes to think what it will all cost—the most lovely *trousseau* all packed in such nice boxes—some marked cabin and some—but that's a trifle. The important thing is that the clothes are charming, just what you would expect from Louise's taste. I do hope that papa will not make any fuss about her bill. They are not dear at all, for material and workmanship (can you say workmanship, when it's needlework, and all done by women?) are simply splendid. I never saw such beautiful things.

‘And so here I am, Kate, a married woman, off to India with my husband. Isn't it wonderful? I can't say that I feel much different myself. I am the same old Stella, always after my fun. I shouldn't wonder in the least if after a while Charlie were to set up a way of his own, and think he can stop me; but I don't advise him to try, and in the meantime he is as sweet as sugar and does exactly what I like. It is nice, on the whole, to be called my Lady, and it is very nice to see how respectful all the people are to a married person, as if one had grown quite a great personage all at once. And it is nicer still to turn a big man round your little finger, even when you have a sort of feeling, as I have sometimes, that it may not last. One wonderful thing is that he is always meeting somebody he knows. People in society I believe know everybody—that is, really everybody who ought to be known. This man was at school with him, and that man belongs to one of his clubs, and another was brother to a fellow in his regiment, and so on, and so on—so we need never be alone unless we like: they turn up at every corner. Of course, he knows the ladies too, but this is not a good time in the year for them, for the grandees are at their country houses and English

people only passing through. We did see one gorgeous person, who was a friend of his mother's (who is dead, Heaven be praised!), and to whom he introduced me: but she looked at me exactly as if she had heard that Charlie had married a barmaid, with a "How do you do?" up in the air—an odious woman. She was, of course, Countess of Something or Other, and as poor as a Church mouse. Papa could buy up dozens of such countesses; tell him I said so.

'You will wonder what we are doing knocking about in Paris when the regiment is on the high seas; but Charlie could not take me, you know, in a troopship, it would have been out of the question, and we couldn't possibly have spent our honeymoon among all those men. So he got his leave and we are going by a P. and O. boat, which are the best, and which we pick up at Brindisi or at Suez, or somewhere. I am looking forward to it immensely, and to India, which is full of amusement, everybody tells me. I intend to get all the fun I can for the next year, and then I hope, I do hope, dear Kate, that papa may send for us home.

'How is poor dear papa? You may think I am a little hypocrite, having given him such a shock, but I did really hope he would see some fun in it—he always had such a sense of humour. I have thought of this, really, truly, in all I have done. About the *trousseau* (which everybody thinks the greatest joke that ever was), and about going off in the yacht, and all that, I kept thinking that papa, though he would be very angry, would see the fun. I planned it all for that—indeed, indeed, Kate, I did, whatever you may think. To be sure, Charlie went for half in the planning, and I can't say I think he has very much sense of humour: but, still, that was in my mind all the time. Was he very, very angry when he found out? Did you wake him in the night to tell him and risk an illness? If you did, I think you were very, very much to blame. There is never any hurry in telling bad news. But you are so tremendously straightforward and all that. I hope he only heard in the morning, and had his good night's rest and was not disturbed. It was delicious this time in the yacht, as quiet almost as a mill-pond—just a nice soft little air that carried us across the bay and on to Southsea; such a delightful sail! I ought to have thought of you promenading about in the cold waiting for me without any companion, but I really couldn't, dear. Naturally we were too much taken up with ourselves, and the joy of having got off so nicely. But I do beg

your pardon most sincerely, dear Kate, for having left you out in the cold, really out in the cold—without any figure of speech—like that.

‘But my thoughts keep going back constantly to dear papa. You will miss me a little, I hope, but not as he will miss me. What does he say? Was he very angry? Do you think he is beginning to come round? Oh, dear Kate, I hope you take an opportunity when you can to say something nice to him about me. Tell him Charlie wanted to be married in London, but I knew what papa would think on this subject, and simply insisted for his sake that it should be in the little Steephill Church, where he could go himself, if he liked, and see the register and make sure that it was all right. And I have always thought of him all through. You may say it doesn’t look very like it, but I have, I have, Kate. I am quite sure that he will get very fond of Charlie after a time, and he will like to hear me called Lady Somers; and now that my mind is set at rest and no longer drawn this way and that way by love affairs don’t you know. I should be a better daughter to him than ever before. Do get him to see this, Kate. You will have all the influence now that I am away. It is you that will be able to turn him round your little finger. And, oh, I hope, I hope, dear, that you will do it, and be true to me! You have always been such a faithful, good sister, even when I tried you most with my nonsense. I am sure I tried you, you being so different a kind from such a little fool as Stella, and so much more valuable and all that. Be sure to write to me before we leave Paris, which will be in a week, to tell me how papa is, and how he is feeling about me—and, *oh*, do be faithful to us, dear Kate, and make him call us back within a year! Charlie does not mind about his profession; he would be quite willing to give it up and settle down, to be near papa. And then, you see, he has really a beautiful old house of his own in the country, which he never could afford to live in, where we could arrange the most charming *appartement*, as the French say, for papa for part of the year.

‘Do, dearest Kate, write, write! and tell me all about the state of affairs. With Charlie’s love,

‘Your most affectionate sister,

‘STELLA (LADY) SOMERS.’

‘I have a letter from—Stella, papa,’ said Katherine the same night.

‘Ah!’ he said, with a momentary prick of his ears; then he

composed himself and repeated with the profoundest composure, 'God damn her!' as before.

'Oh, papa, do not say that! She is very anxious to know how you are, and to ask you—oh, with all her heart, papa—to forgive her.'

Mr. Tredgold did not raise his head or show any interest. He only repeated with the same calm that phrase again.

'You have surely something else to say at the mention of her name. Oh, papa, she has done very, very wrong, but she is so sorry—she would like to fling herself at your feet.'

'She had better not do that; I should kick her away like a football,' he said.

'You could never be cruel to Stella—your little Stella! You always loved her the best of us two. I never came near her either in one way or another.'

'That is true enough,' said the old man.

Katherine did not expect any better, but this calm daunted her. Even Stella's absence did not advance her in any way; she still occupied the same place, whatever happened. It was with difficulty that she resumed her argument.

'And you will miss her dreadfully, papa. Only think, those long nights that are coming—how you will miss her with her songs and her chatter and her brightness! I am only a dull companion,' said Katherine, perhaps a little, though not very reasonably, hoping to be contradicted.

'You are that,' said her father calmly.

What was she to say? She felt crushed down by this disapproval, the calm recognition that she was nobody, and that all her efforts to be agreeable could never meet with any response. She did make many efforts, far more than ever Stella had done. Stella had never taken any trouble; her father's comfort had in reality been of very little importance to her. She had pleased him because she was Stella, just as Katherine, because she was Katherine, did not please him. And what was there more to be said? It is hard upon the displeasing one, the one who never gives satisfaction: but the fact remains.

'You are very plain-spoken,' said Katherine, trying to find a little forlorn fun in the situation. 'You don't take much pains to spare my feelings. Still, allowing this to be all true, and I don't doubt it for a moment—think how dull you will be in the evenings, papa! You will want Stella a hundred times in an hour, you will always want her. This winter, of course, they could not

come back; but before another winter, oh, papa, think, for your own advantage!—do say that you will forgive her, and that they may come back!’

‘We may all be dead and gone before another winter,’ Mr. Tredgold said.

‘That is true; but then, on the other hand, we may all be living and very dull and in great, great need of something to cheer us up. Do hold out the hope, papa, that you will forgive her, and send for her, and have her back!’

‘What is she to give you for standing up for her like this?’ said the old man with his grim chuckling laugh.

‘To give—me?’ Katherine was so astonished this time that she could not think of any answer.

‘Because you needn’t lose your breath,’ said her father, ‘for you’ll lose whatever she has promised you. I’ve only one word to say about her, and that I’ve said too often already to please you—God damn her,’ her father said.

And Katherine gave up the unequal conflict—for the moment at least. It was not astonishing, perhaps, that she spent a great deal of her time, as much as the weather would allow, which now was grim November, bringing up fog from land and sea, upon the cliff, where she walked up and down sometimes when there was little visible except a grey expanse of mist behind the feathery tracery of the tamarisk trees; sometimes thinking of those two apparitions of the *Stella* in the bay, which now seemed to connect with each other like two succeeding events in a story, and sometimes of very different things. She began to think oftener than she had ever done of her own lover, he whom she had not had time to begin to love, only to have a curious half-awakened interest in, at the time when he was sent so summarily about his business. Had he not been sent about his business, probably Katherine might never have thought of him at all. It was the sudden fact of his dismissal and the strange discovery thus made, that there was one person in the world at least whose mind was occupied with her and not with Stella, that gave him that hold upon her which he had retained.

She wondered now vaguely what would have happened had she done what Stella had done? (It was impossible, because she had not thought of him much, had not come to any conscious appropriation of him until after he was gone; but supposing, for the sake of argument, that she had done what Stella had done?) She would have been cut off, she and he, and nobody would have been



much the worse. Stella, then, being the only girl of the house, would have been more serious, would have been obliged to think of things. She would have chosen someone better than Charlie Somers, someone that would have pleased her father better; and he would have kept his most beloved child, and all would have been well. From that point of view it would perhaps have been better that Katherine should have done evil that good might come. Was it doing evil to elope from home with the man you loved, because your father refused him—if you felt you could not live without him? That is a question very difficult to solve. In the first place, Katherine, never having been, let us say, very much in love herself, thought it was almost immodest in a woman to say that she could not live without any man. It might be that she loved a man who did not love her, or who loved somebody else, and then she would be compelled, whatever she wished, to live without him. But, on the other hand, there was the well-worn yet very reasonable argument that it is the girl's life and happiness that is concerned, not the parents', and that to issue a ukase like an emperor, or a bull like a pope, that your child must give up the man who alone can make her happy, is tyrannical and cruel. One is commanded to obey one's parents, but there are limits to that command; a woman of, say, thirty for instance (which to Katherine, at twenty-three, was still a great age), could not be expected to obey like a child; a woman of twenty even was not like a little girl. A child has to do what it is told, whether it likes or not; but a woman—and when all her own life is in question?

These were thoughts which Katherine pondered much as she walked up and down the path on the cliff. For some time she went out very little, fearing always to meet a new group of interested neighbours who should question her about Stella. She shrank from the demands, from the criticisms that were sometimes very plain, and sometimes veiled under pretences of interest or sympathy. She would not discuss her sister with anyone, or her father, or their arrangements or family disasters, and the consequence was that, during almost the whole of that winter she confined herself to the small but varied domain which was such a world of flowers in summer, and now, though the trees were bare, commanded all the sun that enlivens a wintry sky, and all the aspects of the sea, and all the wide expanse of the sky. There she walked about and asked herself a hundred questions. Perhaps it would have been better for all of them if she had run

away with James Stanford. It would have cost her father nothing to part with her; he would have been more lenient with the daughter he did not care for. And Stella would have been more thoughtful, more judicious, if there had been nobody at home behind her to bear the responsibility of common life. And then, Katherine wondered, with a gasp, as to the life that might have been hers had she been James Stanford's wife. She would have gone to India, too, but with no *trousseau*, no diamonds, no gay interval at Paris. She would have had only him, no more, to fill up her horizon and occupy her changed life. She thought of this with a little shiver, wondering—for, to be sure, she was not, so to speak, in love with him, but only interested in him—very curious if it had been possible to know more about him, to get to understand him. It was a singular characteristic in him that it was she whom he had cared for and not Stella. He was the first and only person who had done so—at least, the only man. Women, she was aware, often got on better with her than with her sister; but that did not surprise her, somehow, while the other did impress her deeply. Why should he have singled out her, Katherine, to fall in love with? It showed that he must be a particular kind of man, not like other people. This was the reason why Katherine had taken so much interest in him, thought so much of him all this time, not because she was in love with him. And it struck her with quite a curious impression, made up of some awe, some alarm, some pleasure, and a good deal of abashed amusement, to think that she might, like Stella, have eloped with him—might have been living with him as her sole companion for two or three years. She used to laugh to herself and hush up her line of thinking abruptly when she came to this point: and yet there was a curious attraction in it.

Soon, however, the old routine, although so much changed, came back, the usual visitors came to call, there were the usual little assemblages to luncheon, which was the form of entertainment Mr. Tredgold preferred; the old round of occupations began, the Stanley girls and the others flowed and circled about her in the afternoon: and, before she knew, Katherine was drawn again into the ordinary routine of life.

(To be continued.)

## *Marseilles.*

I HAVE had the honour of saying something in these pages about business and legal matters as conducted in the first business city of France. Some things in the daily life of the streets of that city are, in their way, just as remarkable, and these I propose to recount as the memory of a recent visit brings them back to me. And first a word or two more on the subject of law and order. There is a certain market place off the Quai de la Porte, and on the very outskirts of the old town, which has gained (and certainly, as the French phrase has it, has not stolen) a very ugly nickname by reason of the constant murders, the committers of which frequently remain undiscovered, and murderous assaults which take place there after nightfall. Why this particular place should be the place of all others where such infractions of the law take place is not clearly apparent. Possibly the criminal population think it a pity that the reputation of the square, indicated by its nickname, should not be kept up, and possibly also it is merely a matter of habit; or the two things may work together for evil. It is not surprising that the police should always carry and should never be slow in using revolvers; and when I had stayed some time in the place, heard, and seen reported daily in that excellent paper, *Le Petit Marseillais*, the sort of thing that is always likely to happen, I ceased to retain any sort of surprise at a request which had reached me, a few months before, from my friend who is settled at Endoume, the great suburb of Marseilles, that I would send him out two pairs of Derringer pistols. He told me, when in due time I followed on the track of the Derringers, that it was always prudent to carry a 'gun' in your pocket if you walked from Endoume to, say, the Opera House on a darkish night, and, as I have said, after some days' course of *Le Petit Marseillais* at breakfast, I found no kind of difficulty in accepting the statement. Moreover, it is not very long since a foot-passenger, walking in the main road of Endoume at about six on a summer's afternoon, at a point

where there is a generally well-attended *café* on each side of the way, was set upon, robbed, and half-murdered by several ruffians, who were never found out. Had he been equipped with a revolver, it is more than probable that, at that time of day, at any rate, the mere act of drawing it would have been enough to put the rogues to flight, though after nightfall they, on their side, are handy enough with their weapons. It may occur to the rapid eye of a reader that it is absurd to make a fuss about outrages of this kind in Marseilles, when such things may occur any day in any large city of civilisation. That is so, but they do not occur so frequently, and in most cities, if they began to be frequent, steps would be speedily taken to remedy that state of affairs, mentioned in a previous paper, which leaves the whole of the space—about three miles—between the Catalans and the Prado to look after itself, without the help of a single policeman.

The mention of the Prado, the resort of fashion and wealth on a Sunday afternoon, reminds me of the extraordinary driving habits of the Marseillais. Most of the smart young men drive 'steppares' in high trotting-carts, and some of the horses would do much credit to their owners if they were managed in a reasonable way. But the swagger thing to do is to put on steam hard all for a short burst, then drop into a crawl, at which pace you retrace the road taken, and then again break into fire and fury, and so *da capo* and *da capo* past all whooping. It would be interesting to know what are the statistics of lung disease among Marseilles horses. Of course, such of the horses as are mere 'screws' cannot but get worn out pretty soon with such treatment. The habit is also exasperating enough to a person who does not see the fun of conforming to this peculiar fashion, and who is forced to adopt an Agag-like method with his own trap in order to keep out of collisions. Another exasperating trick is common alike to the 'chariots of the great' and to the butcher's or baker's or candle-stick-maker's cart. This is practised when you are driving in the same direction as other vehicles, and a favourite place for it is the length of the Corniche road. Say that you are jogging quietly along, drinking in sunshine, regarding the sapphire sea, and having, as you suppose, that particular stretch of the road to yourself. You hear wheels and the tramp of horseshoes behind you, the noise gets louder and louder, and presently a carriage or a cart whirls past you, goes on ahead some fifty yards, then slowly drops behind you again to a distance of some few hundred yards, and then repeats the experiment again and again so long as you both travel

in the same direction. If there are two conveyances behind you, they are just as likely as not to come up one on each side. The effect upon a nervous beast, unused to such pranks, can be imagined by anyone who loves horses. Another agreeable thing connected with horses and traps is the manner in which traffic of all kinds is conducted. It is no exaggeration to say that it is hardly possible to drive for five or six minutes along the 'Cannebière' without running one of the shafts into somebody's back. It is incumbent upon you to keep up a constant adjuration to all whom it may concern of *Hé!* on a high note, and *Oh!* on a low one—a sort of variation in a stage-whisper of a fireman's shout—but this is really more a matter of convention than of utility, for no foot-passenger will quicken his step or will move at all until it seems as if he must inevitably be run over. (If, in spite of all your care, you do run over him, it means *procès verbaux* and a heavy fine.) His attitude towards a conveyance is one of stolid surprise and attention until it is close upon him. Then a glimmer of comprehension comes into his face, and, seeming to say to himself, 'Hold! I have heard of these things called carriages from my grandfather. He told me it was as well to get out of their way!' he moves tortoise-like off, only to have his performance quickly repeated by another person of precisely similar behaviour.

As to the artisan class in Marseilles, the best of them are most intelligent and pleasant companions when you get to know them, slow at executing commissions, but most commendably careful to execute them thoroughly well. One such, of whom I was fortunate enough to see a good deal, was very well informed, a good talker, and never a bore, with a very fine type of Southern physique. He was, I was told, an excellent actor in the religious play which takes place in the winter, and, if I remember rightly, his part was a very exalted one. This is the more curious because, like a great many of his fellows, he was a pronounced but not in the least degree an aggressive atheist. The attitude of such people to the Church is singular. They are really atheists; they do not attempt to wrap up their unbelief with such words as 'agnosticism'; and yet nothing would induce them to take any step of importance in civil life without an elaborate and expensive Church ceremony. Certainly the man to whom I have referred was an exemplary citizen, a capital workman, a capital master to the few men under him, and entirely free from the besetting vice of the Marseilles workmen and small tradesfolk. That vice is absinthe-drinking; and in very cold or very hot weather it kills them off

literally like flies. I remember one day rather hotter than common driving with my host along one of the streets, when we saw a most respectable-looking *bourgeois*, coming out of a liquor-shop, take a few leisurely steps along the pavement. There was not a sign of alcoholic excess about him, but he suddenly stopped dead short, and evidently broke out into a profuse sweat, for he took off his hat and mopped his face and bald head violently. 'There,' said my friend, 'is an illustration pat of what I told you concerning absinthe. That is how it takes them, and if there were a few more degrees of heat we should have seen that man drop as if felled by a sledge-hammer. And he never would have got up again.' Unfortunately, there is too much reason to suppose that this pernicious habit is spreading rapidly among the women, so that, unless some quite unforeseen check is put upon it, in a very few generations there cannot but be a very serious deterioration in the ordinary type. There is another habit common to the workman which is not in the same sense pernicious, and it is this, that they leave their work to attend every baptism, funeral, and marriage where there is the slightest excuse of acquaintanceship for being present, and they then complain of not getting enough work. As to their economy, they hoard like their fellows in other parts of France, but they have not the best idea of how to use capital. In the case, for instance, of a small shopkeeper, one bad day after a prosperous week will so discourage him that he will let his stock run out without renewing it, and when orders come in again will sit down and bewail his hard lot.

As to labour and capital, there are instances in which the friendly—in the full sense of the word—relations of old time between employer and employed are kept up, but this is the exception rather than the rule. One curious career is that of the *porte-faix*, who, if he sets his mind and body to doing so, may rise and rise until he becomes a *maître de porte-faix*; but there he stops, unless he has been attached all through to one house, and that one of the old-fashioned sort, in which case he may look forward to entering the house itself.

As to another kind of workmen—journalists—an odd custom prevailing at Marseilles is found in other French cities. You want, let us suppose, to get to the top of the tree as a writer of leading articles, essays, stories—what you will, in fact—in a daily paper. You send in your articles signed with a name, real or assumed. If the editor thinks well of them he will put them in, but you will not get a penny for them until there is reason to



suppose that the name has 'caught on' with the public. After that—if it happens—you may get paid at the rate of 20*l.* for a story or leader.

Another working class—the doctors—have a strange custom. There is no such thing as a consulting physician, and no set line of demarcation between physicians and surgeons. Some men, of course, rise naturally to the highest reputations, and I was not a little astonished when my host told me concerning one of these whom I knew and liked (as everyone must who knows him), that he (my host) had the greatest difficulty in persuading the physician not to treat the question of fees cabman-wise, with a well-bred equivalent for 'Leave it to you, sir!' Let me, *à propos* of this, give a word of advice to those who may stay in a city which very well repays a sojourn, although in this paper I have not dwelt upon its undoubted charms. Never be caught at sunset without a light wrap to whip on. Half-an-hour or less after sundown you are safe, but at the actual setting there is a great matter of a chill, from which, as I had ignorantly neglected to take a wrap, I got a *grippe*, for which the only consolation was that it made me acquainted with the physician referred to above.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

## *O to be Gods in Babylon.*

‘**T**HE Gods abide in Babylon :  
 Of old they came to Babylon ;  
 Footsore, by green-hedged country roads,  
 Mere men were they in plain attire,  
 Oft scant their fare and chill their fire,  
 But when they died men crowned them Gods,  
 Let us, too, go to Babylon.’

So spake the lads who would be Gods,  
 Three lads who went to Babylon.

All through the night the snorting steam,  
 Unto the city of their dream,  
 With clank and rumble, jolt and stand,  
 Held on, while past them fled the land ;  
 Fled streams and meadows, hills and downs,  
 Fled lochs and forests, hamlets, towns ;  
 Till set the moon and paled the stars,  
 And dawn unfurled—Babylon !

. . . . .

The majesty of Babylon !

The mystery of Babylon !

Her stately years, like laden wains,  
 Piled high with efforts, failures, hopes,  
 And sheaf on sheaf of fruitless gains,  
 Moved slowly down Life's harvest slopes :  
 Time, heavy footed, led them on,  
 But Youth, outworn, a-top lay prone.  
 Old grew the lads in Babylon.

The first, him Pleasure whispered fair;  
About him blew her 'wildering hair;  
Her glamour circled him like flame,  
He ceased to strive, forgot his aim;  
And woke at last, a soul beshorn,  
Himself unto himself forsworn:  
Dull, dull as doom the city's roar,  
Where sink the souls who rise no more,  
In the deep, deep dark of Babylon!

And one with all too tender eyes  
Saw but the wrong to heaven that cries;  
The smoke of men's vain torment rose,  
And dimmed all else but human woes:  
Nor hope nor help on any hand,  
A stone this heart of Mammonland!  
Oh sunbathed hills! were ye a dream?  
Oh fields of youth! Oh flower-fringed stream!  
Out of the fog and home to die,  
He, gasping, fled from Babylon!

Through toilsome years, by stony roads,  
One reached the dwelling of the Gods;  
The silences that brood alway  
In Thought's vast temple, domed by day:  
Here found he strength and soul-increase;  
In work knew rest—in tumult peace;  
Here burned his lamp, and lo! its ray  
Shone o'er the world from Babylon!

J. K. LAWSON.

### ‘Exit Roscius.’

TOWARDS the latter end of the year 1775, those of ‘Farmer George’s’ London lieges who had exhausted their interest in the pending trials of Her Grace of Kingston and that ‘beauteous sufferer,’ Mrs. Margaret Caroline Rudd, must—if they had escaped the prevalent influenza—have found an equally absorbing occupation in discussing the respective merits of the Covent Garden and Drury Lane playhouses. At Covent Garden, then under the elder Colman, Mr. Sheridan, junr., who, rather less than a year earlier, had opened his brilliant dramatic career with the comedy of *The Rivals*, was now drawing crowded audiences to the bright little opera of *The Duenna*, his very singable songs in which were effectively aided by the admirable settings of his father-in-law, Mr. Linley. On the other hand, at Drury Lane, Garrick had not only revived the Jacobean comedy of *Eastward Hoe* under the title of *Old City Manners*—his adapter being the accomplished Mrs. Charlotte Lennox—but, calling in the aid of the brothers Adam, of Adelphi memory, he had beautified and Italianised his theatre, making it much more commodious inside, and decorating it externally—towards Bridges Street—with a brand-new colonnade, balcony, and pediment, the last being surmounted with a classic trophy, flanked at the angles, in place of the familiar figures of Thalia and Meipomene, by a lion and a unicorn. Concerning all these novelties, to judge from the letters in the papers, the quidnuncs of 1775 must have been abundantly exercised. ‘Covent Garden’ writes sneeringly to ‘Drury Lane’ on her ‘late acquisition of a new gown and petticoat’; and ‘Drury Lane’ retorts in a similar spirit of feline acrimony. ‘Impartial,’ commending the improved accommodation, nevertheless holds that, ‘with all deference to the taste of Messrs. A—m, . . . there is wanting a *simplex munditus* (*sic*) in the ornaments to render them truly elegant,’ while another correspondent sarcastically suggests that quite enough has been said

upon this purely secondary topic of embellishment. But 'Adelphos' (whose pseudonym suggests an advocate either of the architects or the manager) is of opinion that 'Mr. Garrick, with a spirit undiminished by age, has . . . made it [his theatre] the prettiest Assembly-room in the whole Town.' The same writer, besides, regards it as unaccountable that although he [Mr. G.] 'himself performs his best parts three or four times a week' (an assertion which was of course promptly contradicted), all the world should flock ungratefully to that 'new sing-song thing,' *The Duenna*; and the public are significantly reminded that their Roscius is no longer young, and cannot possibly last for ever. 'In a few years, perhaps months,' says 'Adelphos' with tears in his voice, 'this bright luminary of the stage must yield to the common lot of mortality.'

The date of this letter, with its note of portent, is November 27, and before Christmas had come Garrick was actively arranging the step which, with more or less sincerity, he had so long foreshadowed—his definite and final retirement. For this various reasons have been separately assigned, but it is probable that no single cause can be made entirely responsible for a course which must have been dictated by many considerations. In the first place, exceptional as were still his energy and his vivacity, he was no longer the Garrick who four-and-thirty years before, inaugurating a new era in the art of acting, had bounded on the boards at Goodman's Fields. He was in his sixtieth year; and already, in addition to the wear and tear of an unusually harassing profession, he had to contend with two especially eighteenth-century ailments—gout and stone. His old partner, Lacy, moreover, had very recently died, and the managerial cares which this loss augmented were not made more easy to endure by the contentious character of Lacy's son and successor. His three leading ladies, Mrs. Yates, Miss Younge and Mrs. Abington, gifted and indispensable, no doubt, as they were, nevertheless taxed all his tireless diplomacy to keep them in good humour with himself and with each other—Mrs. Abington, in particular, being especially 'aggravating.' 'What with their *airs, indispositions, tails, fringes*, and a thousand whimsies beside,' he is made to say in the *Morning Chronicle* for December 16, 'a manager leads the life of a devil,' and he declared his intention of speedily relinquishing that thankless vocation. The sentiment thus expressed found its echo in more than one contemporary epigram. At the same time, it may be assumed

that when he re-decorated his theatre he had not contemplated any very immediate severance from the scene of his ancient successes. The popularity of *The Duenna*, the consciousness of his own relaxing rule, and the development of the graver of his two disorders, seem, nevertheless, to have precipitated a decision which, in spite of all collateral anxieties, he might—after the traditional fashion of his kind—have continued to postpone indefinitely; and at the close of December he wrote in plain terms to offer the refusal of his share in Drury Lane to Colman. The offer was promptly declined. The Covent Garden manager, who would probably have bought the whole, refused a part. He would not for worlds, he protested, sit on the throne of Brentford with an assessor, unless (he was careful to add) that assessor could be Garrick himself. Such being the state of the case, it became necessary to seek for other purchasers. Ultimately Sheridan, his father-in-law, and two others found the money required—some 35,000*l.*—and Garrick prepared to make surrender of his stewardship.

With the minor details of his last months of management—enlivened as they were by fresh vagaries on the part of Mrs. Abington—this paper is not so much concerned as with the series of farewell performances which preceded his departure from the stage. Towards the end of January the purchase of the share appears to have been completed, and Garrick's sincerest friends were congratulating him on his approaching emancipation. From his old antagonist and warm-hearted admirer, Mrs. Clive, already herself in retirement at Twickenham, came, in particular, a most cordial and characteristic epistle, containing an opportune testimony to that part of his talent with which the public were least acquainted—to wit, the extraordinary patience and administrative skill with which, behind all the triumphs of the house, he had presided as wire-puller in chief. Other correspondents were as demonstrative in their felicitations. By and by the *Gentleman's Magazine* announced the sale as an accomplished fact, and not long afterwards the sequence of leave-takings began. Strictly speaking, the first of these valedictory representations was Garrick's assumption, on February 7, of the part of Sir Anthony Branville in the recently revived comedy of *The Discovery*. Mrs. Sheridan's old beau, who 'emits' volcanic language with the ardour of an iceberg, was not one of the actor's great characters, but even here spectators like the younger Colman remembered how adroitly, to fit a fantastic personality, Garrick contrived to



quench the lustre of his wonderful eyes so as to reduce those orbs to the likeness of 'coddled gooseberries.' Upon this occasion Mrs. Abington took the part of Lady Flutter. After *The Discovery* he played four times during the ensuing month in four different pieces. Then, for March 7, was announced what proved to be his final appearance in the last of these—an adaptation by Aaron Hill of Voltaire's *Zaire*, in which, with Miss Younge as the heroine, he took the part of Lusignan, the blind old King of Jerusalem. It was a favourite rôle; and long after, one of those who saw him act it at this very date, communicated to Christopher North—over the signature of 'Senex'—his still green recollections of that memorable night. They are too lengthy and too discursive to quote, but they afford a vivid idea of the rapt attention with which Garrick's entry, not made till the third act, was greeted by the expectant house, in which a pin might have been heard to fall. The impression produced upon this witness was that of something entirely unknown, unprecedented, unexpected in matters dramatic. To him it seemed that all his preconceived ideas of acting were wrong—that Garrick was not acting, but that he *was* Lusignan—that 'by a kind of magic . . . the old king was conjured from his grave, and exhibited to the spectators *in propria personâ*, as just liberated from the long confinement of his dungeon—first unable to distinguish objects in the light, after such a length of gloomy incarceration, and afterwards gradually recovering the power of vision.' The illusion thus created was enhanced by that admirable elocution 'which compelled you to believe that what he [Garrick] spoke was not a conned lesson, but suggested by the exigency of the moment, and the immediate dictate of his own mind.' The same night witnessed the production of a farce by Colman called *The Spleen; or, Islington Spa*. Its merit was not extraordinary, though it was acted for fourteen or fifteen nights; but its 'Prologue,' said to have been imitatively spoken by King in the part of the bookseller Rubrick, is notable as containing the first public announcement of Garrick's decision to leave the stage. After describing a tradesman who quits his business for the fallacious delights of a country-seat at Islington, King went on:—

The master of *this shop*, too, seeks repose,  
Sells off his stock-in-trade, his verse and prose,  
His daggers, buskins, thunder, lightning, and old clothes.  
Will he in rural shades find ease and quiet?  
Oh, no!—  
He'll sigh for Drury, and seek peace in riot.

For more than a month after the above-mentioned representation of *Zara* Garrick's name is absent from the bills, which are mainly occupied by the benefits of other members of the company. On April 11, however, he played, for the last time, one of those low-comedy parts in which, even more than another, he gave evidence, not only of that versatility which had so astonished Count Orloff, but also of that power of confining himself rigorously within the limits of his impersonation, which is held to be one of his greatest gifts. This was the part of Abel Drugger in the *Alchemist*. It was sometimes debated while he lived whether in this character he was really more successful than his contemporary Weston, and it is known that he himself greatly admired Weston's acting of Drugger. But the consensus of opinion among the best-instructed critics of the day is that Weston, while investing the rôle with much individual humour, never attained to that complete absorption of its essence which, in Garrick's case, compelled the commendations of onlookers as diverse as Hogarth and Hannah More. 'You are in your element,' said Hogarth in a burst of blunt admiration, after seeing his friend in Drugger and Richard the Third, 'when you are begrimed with dirt or up to your elbows in blood.' But no one has written more graphically or acutely of this 'quite *unique* creation' (as he calls it) than Hogarth's own best commentator, Lichtenberg, who was in London at the close of 1775. After dwelling upon its extension of the author's conception, and the minute by-play and subtle facial variation by which that extended conception was interpreted and made intelligible to every being in the theatre, Lichtenberg goes on to give an illustration of what he regards as Garrick's specific superiority to Weston. The passage is so excellent an example of his critical insight (he only once saw Garrick as Drugger) that it deserves unmutated quotation. The admirable rendering is that of the late Lord Lytton. 'I will only mention,' says Lichtenberg, 'by way of example, a single trait, which Weston is quite incapable of imitating, and still more incapable of inventing. When the astrologers spell out the name of Abel Drugger in the stars, the poor gull says, with a certain self-satisfaction, "*That is my name.*" Now, Garrick gives to this satisfaction the quality of *secret* self-homage. He makes you at once understand that, at this moment, there is in the depths of Abel's confused sensations, a vague inarticulate sentiment that any open expression of self-satisfaction would be wanting in respect to the majesty of the stars. He turns softly aside

from the astrologers, and, for a minute or two, you see him silently caressing and enjoying this new sensation, till the rapture of it gradually flushes the wrinkling circles round his eyes, and at last overflows his whole countenance, as he half whispers to himself, "*That is my name.*" The effect, upon all who behold it, of this unconscious betrayal of secret self-congratulation is quite indescribable. You at once recognise in Abel Drugger, not only the passive stupidity of a born fool, but the active absurdity of a fool who is beginning to reason his way to a ridiculously high opinion of himself.'

That the words spoken by Drugger are not Ben Jonson's, but an addition to the prompt-book by some later hand, detracts nothing from the merits of this vivid piece of critical finesse. However they originated, Garrick certainly justified their retention in the acting copy of the play. A fortnight later, on Thursday, April 25, he bade farewell to another of 'rare Ben's' characters—that of Kitely, the jealous city merchant of *Every Man in his Humour*. Beyond the verdict of Walpole—not an enthusiastic or even a sympathetic critic of Garrick—to the effect that this ranked with Ranger in *The Suspicious Husband* as one of his capital performances (a praise which he did not vouchsafe to his Lear), little record seems to have been preserved respecting his appearance as Kitely, which is not mentioned by 'Senex' above quoted, while Hannah More, who was present on this occasion, confines herself to recording the fact. In regard to his next 'last night,' as Sir John Brute in *The Provoked Wife*, there are better data, since, for the profit of posterity, Lichtenberg was lucky enough to witness it. As, in the case of Abel Drugger, he had contrasted Garrick with Weston, so, in speaking of Vanbrugh's blackguard baronet, he contrasts Garrick with Quin. The most interesting passage of his notes, however, turns upon Garrick's unrivalled facial power. 'I was close to the stage,' he says, 'and could observe him narrowly. He entered with the corners of his mouth so turned down as to give to his whole countenance the expression of habitual sottishness and debauchery. And this artificial form of the mouth he retained, unaltered, from the beginning to the end of the play; with the exception only that, as the play went on, the lips gaped and hung more and more in proportion to the gradually increasing drunkenness of the character he represented. This made-up face was not produced by stage paint, but solely by muscular contraction; and it must be so identified by Garrick with his idea of Sir John Brute as to

be *spontaneously* assumed by him whenever he plays that part, otherwise his retention of such a mask, without ever once dropping it either from fatigue or surprise, even in the most boisterous action of his part, would be quite inexplicable.' After this, one can understand what Johnson meant by telling Miss Burney that Garrick might well look much older than he was, 'for his face had had double the business of any other man's.'

There were, however, graver reasons why he should look old. He was really ill, and nothing but his invincible energy could have kept him going. 'Gout, stone, and sore throat! yet I am in spirits,' he had written in February to a friend. Added to this came the nervous tension of these farewell representations, increased and intensified by the enthusiasm of his hearers. 'I thought the audience were cracked,' he said of the reception of Abel Drugger, 'and they almost turned my brain.' Yet no sooner had he bidden good-bye to Sir John Brute than he followed up that part by three more successively, all for the last time, and all in comedy. On May 2 he played Leon in his own version of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*; on the 7th, Archer in *The Beaux' Stratagem*; and on the 9th, Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*. The leading feminine part on each occasion was taken by Mrs. Abington—*The Stratagem*, as it was familiarly called, being selected for her benefit (when she also acted in *The Man of Quality*, an adaptation from Vanbrugh's *Relapse*). Garrick was supreme in all of the three characters named. Nothing—according to those contemporaries who were privileged to see them—could be better than the gay vivacity of his Benedick; nothing exceed the magnificent gallantry—the manly dignity of his Leon. But it was in the laced hat, and brilliant light blue and silver livery of Farquhar's gentleman-footman that he must have out-topped the record. 'Never,' it was said, 'had appeared so genteel a footman, or so complete a gentleman: the one fit to triumph over the pert airs of an innkeeper's fair daughter [Cherry]; the other inspired with that happy impudence, so timely corrected by a most profound respect, as not to be resisted by the finest woman in the world [Mrs. Sullen], languishing under the neglect of a cruel husband.' To the unmixed enjoyment of this 'last time,' there was only one irremediable drawback—the absence of that unapproachable Scrub, Thomas Weston, who had died in the preceding January, and whose part was taken by Yates.

By this time Garrick had bid adieu to no fewer than eight of

his most popular parts. Out of these—with the exception of Kitley, which can scarcely be classed as comic—only that of Lusignan belongs in strictness to the domain of Tragedy. The farewells of Lear, of Richard, of Hamlet, were yet to come. From a letter in his correspondence which seems to have been misdated, he must also, at one period, have thought of adding Macbeth to the list. 'I shall play Lear,' he writes, 'next week, and Macbeth (perhaps) in the old dresses, with new scenes, the week after that, and then "*exit Roscius*"' (which last two words, it may be observed, we have borrowed for the title of this paper). But whatever he may have originally intended, *Hamlet* was advertised for May 30, and, according to the notice in the public prints, certain omissions were to be made. To these he referred in the letter quoted above. 'I have ventured to produce *Hamlet*, with alterations. It was the most imprudent thing I ever did in all my life; but I had sworn I would not leave the stage till I had rescued that noble play from all the rubbish of the fifth act. I have brought it forth without the Grave-digger's trick and the fencing match.' He goes on to say that the course he had taken had been 'received with general approbation, beyond my most warm expectations.' These changes, which Lichtenberg declares Garrick should never have assented to, and which must be laid at the door of Voltaire and French influence, had, however, no longer life than the actor; and the public, according to Davies, soon clamoured for their *Hamlet* 'as it had been acted from time immemorial.' Of Garrick's assumption of this part at this time, perhaps the most important record is that of Hannah More, who, nevertheless, did not see him on this particular occasion, but on a penultimate performance in April, just after he had played Abel Druggier for the last time. She sat in the pit, close to the orchestra, with the two Burkes, Sheridan, and Warton for neighbours. As a stage critic she is naturally not to be compared with those already mentioned, but her words give the note of enthusiasm which animated the majority of those who (if they were fortunate enough to gain admittance) were now crowding Old Drury from all parts of the country whenever Garrick's name was in the bills. 'I staid in town to see *Hamlet*,' she writes, 'and I will venture to say, that it was such an entertainment as will probably never again be exhibited to an admiring world. . . . The requisites for *Hamlet* are not only various, but opposed. In him [Garrick] they are all united, and as it were concentrated. . . . To the most eloquent expression of the eye, to the hand-

writing of the passions on his features, to a sensibility which tears to pieces the hearts of his auditors, to powers so unparalleled, he adds a judgment of the most exquisite accuracy, the fruit of long experience and close observation, by which he preserves every gradation and transition of the passions, keeping all under the controul of a just dependence and natural consistency. So naturally, indeed, do the ideas of the poet seem to mix with his own, that he seemed himself to be engaged in a succession of affecting situations, not giving utterance to a speech, but to the instantaneous expression of his feelings, delivered in the most affecting tones of voice, and with gestures that belong only to nature. . . . A few nights before I saw him in Abel Drugger; and had I not seen him in both, I should have thought it as possible for Milton to have written *Hudibras*, and Butler *Paradise Lost*, as for one man to have played Hamlet and Drugger with such excellence.'

From a letter following the one from which these extracts are derived, it seems that Mrs. Garrick petitioned Miss More for a copy of this little 'criticism,' and it is quite possible that 'dear Nine'—as Roscius playfully called her—was not entirely unmindful that her words might eventually 'meet his eye.' Her rather rhetorical account may be supplemented by that of another witness (in all probability) of this same April performance. This was Joseph Farington, the landscape painter and Royal Academician, for whose impressions we are indebted to those gossiping volumes, *The Recollections of John Taylor*, proclaimed on his title-page to be author of the farce of *Monsieur Tonson*. Farington told Taylor that he went to see *Hamlet* acted by Garrick in his last season. Until the entrance of the prince with the royal court in Scene 2, he paid little attention to the play; and then, observing the actor's worn and painted face, his bulky form, and the high-heeled shoes he had too palpably adopted to increase his height, concluded that Garrick was going to expose himself by attempting to perform a part for which age had rendered him unfit. But at length he began to speak, and such was 'the truth, simplicity, and feeling' which he displayed, that Farington speedily lost sight of everything but the Hamlet which Shakespeare had conceived.

To the advertisement of the last *Hamlet* is appended—'On Saturday [*i.e.* June 1] Mr. Garrick will perform a principal Part in Comedy.' This was the part of Ranger in *The Suspicious Husband*, which was accordingly played on the date named. It is a rôle which ranks with such lighter characters as those of Archer



and Benedick, and we have the assurance of Mrs. Siddons that it was one of Garrick's 'most delightful' impersonations—a verdict in which even Walpole would have agreed. After this, on Monday, June 3, came what had been intended to be the last performance of *Richard the Third*. It was, however, repeated on Wednesday, June 5, 'by Command of their Majesties,' being followed (also by command) by Garrick's farce of *Bon Ton*. This second performance must have been a cruel ordeal for Garrick, upon whose physical powers the part of 'crook'd-backed Richard,' as he was described in the bills, made inexorable demands—demands with which his increased infirmities made it more and more difficult to comply. 'I dread the fight,' he told his friend Cradock, 'and the fall. I am afterwards in agonies.' Yet he surprised the King by the extraordinary activity with which he ran about the field. His Lady Anne, upon these two occasions, was Mrs. Siddons, then young and (as always) beautiful, but not yet risen to the maturity of her powers, and only imperfectly known to the London playgoer. Years afterwards she told John Taylor that she still retained the keenest recollection of Garrick's terrible energy in this part and in that of Lear. She remembered particularly how, in rehearsing Lady Anne, he begged her, 'as he drew her from the couch, to follow him step by step, for otherwise he should be obliged to turn his face from the audience, and he acted much with his features.' She promised to attend to his wishes, but the intensity of his acting entirely overcame her, and she was constrained to pause, 'when he gave her such a look of reprehension as she never could recollect without terror.'

Mrs. Siddons seems to have acted only six times with Garrick—thrice as Mrs. Strickland in *The Suspicious Husband*, and thrice as Lady Anne in *Richard the Third*—the last performance of the latter piece being also the last time they ever appeared together. On the next day (Thursday, June 6), the *Public Advertiser* announced that Garrick would play Lear on the following Saturday, 'being the last Time but one of his appearing on the Stage.' As to the supreme excellence of this impersonation, which duly took place on the 8th, there seems to be no question. Cumberland declared that it was one of the three finest pieces of acting he had ever witnessed, the other two being Henderson's Falstaff and Cooke's Iago; and Reynolds told Hannah More (who of course was rapturous) that it took him 'full three days before he got the better of it.' Years after the occurrence, Bannister related to Rogers how Garrick had thrilled him in Act II. by his utterance of the words, 'O fool, I shall go mad!' and O'Keefe, again, could

recall the exquisite tenderness and pathos with which, wistfully asking, 'Be your tears wet?' he touched the cheek of Cordelia in Act IV.; while the traditions are unanimous as to the effect of the terrible paternal curse of Act I., under the influence of which the very audience seemed to blanch and shudder. One of the most fervid of the written tributes which Garrick received at this time came in the form of a farewell letter from the beautiful Madame Necker—the sometime love of Gibbon—then on a visit to England. 'Je ne sçais, Monsieur,' she wrote on May 14, 'où je trouverai des termes pour rendre l'effrayante impression que vous nous avez faite hier; vous vous êtes rendu maître de notre âme toute entière, vous l'avez bouleversée, vous l'avez remplie de terreur et de pitié, je ne puis penser encore aux différentes expressions de votre physionomie sans que mes yeux se remplissent de larmes. Quelle superbe et touchante leçon vous nous avez donnée! quelle horreur pour l'ingratitude! quel amour! quel respect pour la vieillesse! même injuste, même égarée; oh! que n'ai-je encore les auteurs de ma vie? que ne puis-je porter à leurs pieds tous les sentiments que vous avez élevés dans mon cœur, et y répandre les larmes déchirantes que vous m'avez fait verser? Toute ma pensée se concentre sur les divers caractères de la vieillesse affligée; je fuis et je cherche cette image, et jamais rien ne s'est gravé plus profondément dans mon souvenir.'

Garrick was justly gratified by this impassioned homage, and he showed his pleasure in his reply. But his farewells were not without their pangs of separation. When, on this same occasion, he got back to the greenroom, he said with a touch of sadness to his Cordelia (Miss Younge) that he should never again figure as her father. The actress fell upon her knees, and begged him at least to give her a father's blessing. Raising her kindly, he complied with her request; and then murmuring to those who had crowded round, 'God bless you all!' hurriedly quitted the room. Miss Younge (afterwards Mrs. Pope), who told the story, could seldom repeat it without tears.

But the *ineluctabile tempus* was at hand, and on Monday, June 10, 1776, came what, in modern theatrical parlance, would be 'positively the last appearance.' That Garrick would have chosen some important character on this occasion might perhaps have been expected. The renewed representation of Richard, however, and the demands made upon him in *Lear*, taken in connection with the sufficiently pathetic aspects of this abandonment of his profession, decided him to make his farewell bow in a less

arduous part. He chose that of Don Felix in *The Wonder* of Mrs. Centlivre—an impersonation having certain affinities with that of Jonson's Kitey. From floor to ceiling the theatre was crowded by admirers of all ranks, and of almost all nationalities. The proceedings opened with a prologue in aid of the charitable fund for players set on foot by himself, to which the profits of the night were to be devoted; and then came the piece. 'Never,' says the *Morning Post*, 'were the passions of love—jealousy, rage, &c. so highly coloured, or admirably set off: in short, he finished his comic course with as high a theatrical climax as he did on Saturday evening, his tragic one.' Replying to the already quoted letter of Madame Necker, he himself supplies some account of his feelings. 'Though I performed my part,' he says, 'with as much, if not more spirit than I ever did, yet, when I came to take the last farewell, I not only lost almost the use of my voice, but of my limbs too: it was indeed, as I said, a most awful moment.' He here refers to the brief and unaffected address which he gave at the close. There was no attempt at an epilogue; 'the jingle of rhyme, and the language of fiction,' he told his audience, would be unsuited to the occasion. In a few faltering and almost conventional words, which were interrupted by a burst of genuine tears, he confined himself to assuring them of the sincerity of his past efforts on their behalf, and of his unalterable gratitude for their long kindness to himself. The 'Great Garland Dance' customary at the end of Act I. had been already omitted; and it was now felt by spectators and performers alike that the 'musical entertainment' of *The Waterman*, which was intended to follow, could not take place. And so—mingled with the hysteric sobbings of Mrs. Garrick in her box—the curtain came down upon the excited plaudits and farewells of one of the most brilliant and enthusiastic audiences that had ever filled the house.

Five-and-forty years after this event, and not many months before her own death, Mrs. Garrick, at that time an old lady of more than ninety-five, and interested to the last in any relics of her 'Davy,' visited the British Museum at the invitation of Mr. J. T. Smith, then Keeper of the Prints and Drawings, to inspect Dr. Burney's collection of Garrick portraits. The inquirer of to-day may still study, in the Print Room at Bloomsbury, the identical engravings and sketches which the great actor's widow saw in August 1821, and he may re-create from them, if he can, the

images which they evoked in her nonagenarian recollections. They will see the splendid Archer and the sorry Scrub, sitting much in the positions in which contemporaries have described them:—Garrick, airy, elegant, and *dégagé*; Weston, awestruck and awkward, in red stockings and a green apron. They will see the white-haired Lusignan, in his gorgeous dressing-gown, taking the little cross from a Zara whose architectural costume might have been designed by William Kent himself. They will see the restless-eyed Kitely of Reynolds; they will see Zoffany's inimitable Abel Drugger, leering round with stupid cunning at Face and Subtle, while he presses his tobacco into his pipe-bowl with his thumb; they will see Sir John Brute, in his woman's hoop and cap, savagely cudgelling the watch in Covent Garden and wearing upon his deboshed and besotted visage the very look that Lichtenberg had noted. They will see Lear in his ermine, buffeted by the storm; and Wilson's Hamlet in his black velvet; and the Richards of Hogarth and Nathaniel Dance—the latter by far the finer of the two. Yet with all these aids to historic reconstruction, much must still remain unrealised. So true are Garrick's own prophetic words in the Prologue to *The Clandestine Marriage*:—

Nor Pen nor Pencil can the Actor save,  
The Art, and Artist, share one common Grave.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

## *The New Centurion.*

A TALE OF AUTOMATIC WAR.

### LETTER VI.—(continued.)

AFTER a long time spent in dreary waiting, we, of the forward guns, could see, on looking down the long fighting decks, some movement among C——'s men astern, that was not mere drill. Presently one of his guns boomed out; then there was a long pause; then another roar, then another pause. The next thing we heard was more crash overhead, but nothing came of it; whatever it was that had gone, it had no effect on us in our 'shelter-trench.' For a long time this went on, C——'s guns firing very slowly, and at still longer intervals something hitting our upper works.

At noon the men's dinners were brought round to them, as they stood at their quarters, but it was more a form than not; still it showed our captain's purpose to play a waiting game, and, therefore, not to have his men knocked up at the outset. This was clear, and thoroughly disgusted I was; I knew that I could make those Frenchmen feel, if only I was given the chance, and loafing about on the platform decks, doing nothing, was simply sickening. The more I thought of it the more angry I got, but it was no use being angry. The mess tins disappeared, having at least had the good effect of giving the men something to do and think about, and I took a look at the sea through my mirror sights. There was no doubt that there was going to be a dirty night, the swell was getting higher and steeper, and the green seas were now thundering on our forecastle every minute. I could not work the guns ahead in this sea—could I work them abeam? Just as the thought came into my head, the telephone voice said, 'Stand by to engage to starboard.' Instantly we trained over our two guns: every man along the fighting decks was on the alert; the Commander, who had been talking to the fourth lieutenant, stepped instantly in

front of the lower wheel, just below the trunk which leads up to the conning-house—and then there was another pause. I began to think it all a false alarm when I heard our starboard engines stop and reverse; by the sights I saw she was swiftly swaying round, and in a moment came into view the *Jauréguiberry*, bow on, some six cables off. The training was fair on her and the elevation very steady—all that I did was to keep the firing lever over whenever the aim was dead on her. Exactly what we were aiming at I could not tell for the flame and the smoke (cordite has smoke), and the swaying motion, but I knew that we were not far off her forward turret, if not actually on it. Quickly we were round the sixteen points and were passing her starboard to starboard, for she made no attempt to ram or use her torpedoes, and instead she sheered off as if out of control. We shifted our aim to her midship turret and continued the fire. Just at this moment there was a spurt of flame somewhere close to me, and I was sickened with the well-known stench of the melenite fumes. But my guns were firing: I controlled my dizziness enough to keep the aim still on the enemy, and in another moment she was out of my sight astern, and I pulled up the firing lever again. The fumes of the melenite quickly passed. 'K—— come on deck sharp,' said a telephone voice at my ear—but it was my own telephone that sounded, the one that was fitted for my own use, in speaking to the men below, when in the shield, not that from the conning-house. I jumped up the ladder, but as I went I saw a figure stretched out by the lower wheel that I knew too well—it was the dead body of the Commander. The shield was empty, but just behind it was the Captain standing on the cleats at its back.

'What shall we do? The trunk of the conning-house is blown away, the whole place disabled, and the first lieutenant dead. Can you spare me the use of your telephone and go on yourself working from below?'

'Yes, sir; and if you wish, I can disconnect in a few minutes and connect it to the lower deck direct.'

'Good; you shall do so as soon as ever we have settled those fellows. Where is the Commander? I sent for him on deck.'

'The Commander is down, sir.'

'Down? Stay where you are; leave your sights to your people below. Pass my orders, and let one of your people stand by your telephone and pass them on to the lower wheel.'

It was the work of a second to pass down the order and take my place, and then I tried to take in the situation. We were



running down at full speed before the wind and sea towards the enemy's second division, the *Tréhouart* and *Latouche Tréville*, who were hull down in the offing, but rising into view every minute.

'We shall have time to settle those two before the others can interfere with us,' said the Captain in his place just behind me.

'Are the others astern, sir?'

'Yes, I gave them the slip nicely, and you and C—— have given them something else. I don't think the *Jauréguiberry* is good for much more.'

As he spoke a shell came howling overhead and ricocheted along the sea in front of us, throwing up jets of spray but not bursting. Then came another, which also went wide of us; then came one of C——'s middies to ask whether he was to return the fire.

'By no means,' was the answer; 'let him train his guns over to port and stand by to engage on that side.'

The middy went back and I passed the word down to my own subs. to see the ammunition all ready, and to train my two guns over. Very swiftly we neared the enemy, and now we could see that the *Latouche Tréville* was utterly *hors de combat*. The wreck on her decks was cleared away to some extent, but most of her after guns seemed to be disabled, and her list, though not heavier than it had been in the morning, was still too heavy to permit of her guns being worked or the slightest manœuvring being attempted in that rough sea. As we neared, the *Tréhouart* came ahead to meet us and cover her consort, reserving her own fire until we were within 2,000 yards. At that range she fired her bow gun and missed. We kept on, meaning to come to closer quarters. For nearly a minute this lasted; then the captain gave the word to port and fire as the guns bore. For the next minute everything we could fire tore through her, her thin sides not affording the slightest protection even against our Maxims. She made hardly any reply, but starboarded, meaning I suppose to use either ram or torpedo, and just then we starboarded hard too, so that we passed broadside on. She was to windward and rolling heavily in the beam sea. We also were rolling, though not so much, and as we passed her I saw distinctly three 12-inch shells go crashing into her decks. The skipper sprang up into the lower bridge to see what was happening, and conned ship from the lee of the wrecked conning-house, signalling to me with his arms while I passed the word down. The *Tréhouart* was now astern, and right on our beam we saw the *Charlemagne* coming up hand over hand. For a moment our fire was checked; then as we

crossed her bows we sent her all that we could. She did not attempt to ram, and we, keeping our helm still starboarded, headed up to windward on her port side, our ship one mass of flame and smoke on both broadsides. As for the *Charlemagne*, the fire of her quick-firing guns ceased as if by magic. I could see that our shells great and small were hulling her fairly, and turned my head to see what our starboard broadside was doing, just in time to see the hapless *Latouche Tréville* hauling down her colours. I think I began a cheer, but if I did it was drowned by a crash somewhere amidships; then the smoke and gases of our furnaces seemed to stream up from everywhere at once except the funnels, and the next instant the word was passed to cease firing; and how still it all seemed after the roar and crash of those minutes of battle!

The *Charlemagne* had run out of action, and one or both of our funnels were shot away somewhere; this much was clear, but what else had happened I could not make out from my place in the shield. The skipper now sent for C—— to take charge of the deck, and posted some 'links' to pass the word to the wheel, and having done this he hailed me to join him on the upper bridge.

A strange sight it was that met our eyes as we looked round from the creaking wreck of the bridge. It was now evening, the sky was black with hurrying clouds, and a heavy westerly gale was bringing up a tremendous swell. Through the driving wrack shot the coppery rays of a stormy sunset throwing a lurid gleam over the heaving seas and the battered ships. Nearest to us on our starboard quarter was the *Latouche Tréville* just able to keep her head to wind; much farther off, on our port beam, was the *Charlemagne*, also lying to, with her flying deck wrecked and apparently some other damage done, but what we could not make out. Astern of her was the *Tréhouart* settling down in the trough of the sea with the waves making a clean breach over her, and the steam flying away in clouds to leeward. Far away on the port bow we could see the *Jauréguiberry*, apparently on fire, for a long trail of ropy smoke was streaming away from her before the gale. If anything was wanted to make that wild scene look still wilder it was those two eloquent signals of distress—the black pennon from the burning *Jauréguiberry*, and the white streamers from the sinking *Tréhouart*.

The skipper gave me just time enough to take it all in before he spoke. Then—

'K——, what shall we do? The enemy are crippled as you see; can we possibly continue the fight at once?'

'No, sir, not possibly. You have no control over the ship to speak of, and in an hour's time she will be on fire unless you patch these funnels; as you are you cannot possibly tackle the *Charlemagne*, unless she is much more crippled than I take her to be.'

'It will be a terrible night; we shall not be able to fight until the gale is over, unless we do it now.'

'True, sir, but neither can they escape you. They cannot do anything but lie to, at least I am sure that neither the *Jauréguiberry* nor the *Tréhouart* can; and the other cannot leave them. Their damages they probably cannot repair, ours we can; I would suggest to you to lie to and repair damages during the gale, and then you will have them almost at your mercy when it moderates.'

'Well, perhaps you're——by George, she's gone!'

'Gone——what's gone, sir?'

'The *Tréhouart*; your big shells must have gone right through her bottom.'

I had turned as he spoke, and sure enough where the *Tréhouart* had been there was nothing but a quickly vanishing whirlpool in the rolling seas; one division of the enemy was annihilated at all events.

We looked for a minute, then the skipper turned to me and said, 'We must take possession of that prize somehow; I will see to that; you go below and get all hands to repair damages. Take the funnels first and then batten the decks and sides as best you can.'

So I left the bridge and tried, at first, to go down the forward stairs near it, but this I found utterly impossible. Thick volumes of black smoke were rolling up, and the very attempt was suffocation; so I went back to the barbette and down the ladders inside until I reached the platform deck. Here I found the air tolerably clear, thanks to the ventilating fans, but the water was coming in showers through the riddled bulkheads and pouring down on the fighting decks. The greater part of the ship's company were assembled on these decks: we had piped down from quarters, but the main-deck was so full of stifling smoke that they had nowhere else to go. I called for willing hands to follow me, and, stooping low with wet cloths to our faces, we went up the stairs and on to the main-deck. Here I met the chief engineer and one of his assistants with some artificers, attempting amid the stifling heat and smoke to telescope the smashed funnels, and at his request we went forward into the bows to get up some sheet iron and bolts and cotters out of the forepeak. Going forward, we found the forward torpedo gangs, who had left their own gear when we piped down, but had

been unable to get further aft. I ought to have told you before that at quarters they are quite separated from the rest of the crew by the transverse armour bulkheads where the belt ends, which are carried right up to the main-deck without any aperture. The result was that now they were practically cut off in the bows, and there we found them huddled together in the darkness, and drenched by the water that poured through the leaks in our battered decks and topsides. The torpedo lieutenant asked what I was going to do.

‘Do? Why, get out some stuff from the forepeak and patch those funnels first; we’ll see then what’s to be done next.’

I was crusty, I must confess; still, it was trying to be bothered just then. We fumbled our way into the forepeak, found the sheets and bolts and got them on deck, and then dragged them aft as best we could. Coming towards the waist I stumbled across the chief engineer, half insensible from the smoke; he managed to gasp out that the funnels were jammed, and the assistant he thought dead. We carried him forward into the bows, and, finding that the artificers had given it up, we had nothing to do but set to work by ourselves.

Groping about we could make out that a shell had struck and pierced the port funnel, and then gone on and burst in the starboard one nearly at the level of the main-deck. Clearly the port funnel was the easiest job if only we could get inside the casings. There was a scuttle, which we found after some search; then I and the boatswain contrived to get in and fit two plates over the holes, and next in the fearful heat I managed to mark where the holes in the plates came on the funnel. Then we cut out corresponding holes with sharp punches, pushed through bolts slotted for the cotters, fitted on the plates, and quickly secured them. Then we did the same for the outer casing.

This made matters rather better on the main-deck, and gave us more idea of what to do with the starboard funnel. That was a far worse business, for the casings and a large part of the funnel itself were blown quite away. We first measured our plates for the work, then we punched the holes in the funnel, next we fitted the bolts, got the plates into place, and secured them as before. The fires were lowered, no doubt, while we were at work; but still we should never have got it done at all but for our chief engineer’s rare forethought in having the materials ready prepared beforehand; as it was it was not a boiler-maker’s job, though good enough for a smoke-stack.

Long before this was finished all the men who could be spared had been called away to some duty that I did not know. It did not matter to me. The next thing that I had to do was to repair her sides as much as I could. We began by plugging all the cleaner shot-holes. We could not do it from outside, of course, in that sea, but by hammering in elastic plugs as well as we could, and then hammering the torn and bent edges round them, we made a fairly shipshape job of them. While the warrant officers were seeing to this I set to work at the worst places further aft, where the plating was altogether blown away. Here we found it impossible to rig collision-mats. We could only force in sheet iron between the frames and secure it with bolts and cotters where we could; unsatisfactory and fearfully hard work with the awful weight of the water beating against us every minute. Luckily for us there were only shot-holes forward in the bows; the places at which we were at work were all abaft the beam, where we did not feel the heavy seas so much. As it was, we only got it finished at the cost of an arm, and one or two ribs or collar bones broken; and I don't think I ever was so tired in my life. The only thing to be said was that when I had done I was cleaner than when I came from those funnels and not so scorched.

By the time that we had mended the leaks in the sides, from her bows to the after bridge, the day was breaking, and the skipper came down and took a look at the work. The main-deck was now fairly dry and clear of smoke, and it was possible to see what state we were in. The first thing that struck us both was that our Maxim broadside had escaped pretty well; the next was that the work on the sides above the main-deck had made the ship fairly dry, and therefore that there could be no serious injury below it either to her belt or her unarmoured ends. Said the skipper, 'She can fight nearly as well as ever as soon as this gale goes down; meanwhile you fellows must not get knocked up.' So he made the hands who had been at work all night turn in as best they could, and insisted on my doing the same. I found a dry corner, and the next thing that I knew was that some one was shaking me and saying that I had been three hours asleep. On going on deck I found it blowing as hard as ever, but the weather was much thicker. Close astern I could see the *Latouche Tréville* rolling heavily, but not on the whole making such bad weather as I should have expected. The fourth lieutenant was on duty, the Captain lying asleep on a coil of ropes, as much knocked up as I had been. I asked where C—— was, and was told that he had

gone aboard the *Latouche Tréville* as prize master, the *Hornet* putting him aboard, and then going off to act as vedette. There was no change on our decks except that the ruined conning-house had sunk down upon the stump of the trunk, leaving the whole forward bridges one mass of wreck. Some extra preventer-stays had been attached to the funnels, and our dead were laid beneath the ensign under the shelter of the weather bulwarks. In action we usually had about twenty-five men on look-out and other duties about the decks, and of these we had had fourteen killed and eight wounded, not counting the Commander and first lieutenant—a plain proof of what we should have suffered without the 'shelter trench.' The two officers had been slain by the upward and downward blast of the same shell, the armoured trunk within which it burst acting like the barrel of a gun in directing the force of the explosion; and doubtless the Captain would have been killed also, had he not been outside the conning-house at the moment.

There was nothing to be done but to get together all hands fit for duty, and continue repairing damages. Our upper works astern were so fearfully cut about during the long-continued stern chase of the day before that the only thing to be done was to batten the main-deck, and prevent the wet getting into the after hold. There were a great many places forward where the decks needed battening also, and accordingly I set our fellows to work at making them good as far as possible forward and aft. This was not very difficult, as we were sheltered now by our work during the night, and as soon as it was well in hand I was called off to breakfast. On going to my own cabin to see if I could find any clean, not to say dry, clothing I found nearly everything soaked and destroyed, except, strangely enough, the desk in which I had left the notes which form the earlier part of this letter. I opened it and took them out, together with your own letters, and left everything else.

Here I will stop to-night, for I have written more than I meant already, and there is a good deal more to be told.

That breakfast under the weather bulwarks near the after bridge was a strange meeting. Everything aft was wrecked, as I have told you, and, of course, the usual routine was broken through. Captain and ward-room officers alike sat round on anything that was convenient, in clothes sodden with wet and blackened with the fight and the work afterwards, drinking



some coffee brewed without the help of the galley—for that was smashed too—out of anything that came handy, the captain's and ward-room crockery alike being at a sad discount. And in our circle there was a great gap: C—— was away on his duties as prize master, and our Commander and first lieutenant were away too, and at rest. Yet weary, wet, dirty, and lessened in number, we were a proud and happy company; our work was done so far as defeating the enemy's combination was concerned, and it only remained to turn victory into annihilation. What the combination had been we could, of course, only guess, but I suppose every one of us had thought of those four ships fresh and uninjured raising the blockade of Brest; had they done so the Channel Fleet would have had more than enough to do. That risk was over now at all events.

During our meal I asked the Captain whether he proposed to do anything to replace the conning-house. He smiled and said that it was pretty nearly done; he hoped that I had not wanted the engine-room artificers very much, for finding them not at work he had taken them all off for it. Of course I said that I had not wanted them, and was about to speak on some other topic when the signalman reported the *Hornet* close aboard signalling that the enemy were on the move. We, in our turn, signalled to the prize to make the best of her way either to Gibraltar or to England as soon as the gale broke, and then went ahead in pursuit.

While bearing up I went to see what had been going on during the night to replace the conning-house. I expected to see something new, but I did not expect to see what I did. The space left in each shield for the officer of the barbette to stand in when not on the platform deck had originally been some seven feet long by two wide. It had a scuttle at one end, through which he could step down out of the shield on to the spar-deck, and a manhole with a hood in the middle through which he could look round. Each of these spaces had been completely altered; the scuttle was now in the middle, and there were two manholes and hoods. The space under one of these manholes was fitted with the old sights, telephones, and levers for the officer of the barbette; the other was fitted with telephones to the wheel, the engine-rooms, the torpedo-rooms, and the other barbette. In this way there was a place made in each shield for the captain as well as the officer of the barbette, or one officer could, if necessary, do the duty of both. The ship could now be commanded from either shield almost as well as from the old conning-house,

the only real difference being that the new temporary hoods were not a very secure protection for the heads of the officers. Altogether it was a wonderful piece of work, reflecting great credit on the torpedo lieutenant, who had designed it and carried it out in fifteen hours of tempest. I took the opportunity of congratulating him on it, and I hope made up for my crustiness the night before.

Having seen this I went back to the Captain, and asked for his orders as to general quarters. The Commander and first and third lieutenants being all gone, and the conning arrangements being so different, it would clearly be necessary to station the officers differently. He replied that he would command the ship from the after shield, and that I must con her from the forward shield, where I should be as much in communication with him through the telephone as if I were by his side; that the fourth lieutenant must take the wheel, and that the subs. must take command of the guns. Considering all things he thought it better that the senior sub. should be in the shield, and sight from there. I asked him whether the dead should be buried, and after a moment's hesitation he answered: 'No; better not just yet. We will finish with these fellows, and then they shall have a decent burial—we cannot think of that just now.' It was kindly meant, but I could not help wondering that he should forget the sailors' superstition, and the effect which it might have on the ship's company.

Having received the orders I went below, saw all clear and the men standing by their quarters, and finally looked to the heavy gun ammunition, of which I found barely twenty charges per gun of made-up cartridges left. This would not do, so I sent the crews of some disabled Maxims to get the old cartridge cases out of the tanks in the hold into which they were shot after firing, hammer them out where necessary, and refill them. This I suppose they did; I know no more about it, except that we never had any difficulty from want of cartridges. Then I returned to the spar-deck, and stood by ready to take my place. At present the fourth lieutenant was conning ship from the shield, but as soon as the drum beat he would go below, and I should take his place.

We now sighted the enemy going at about their half-speed in the teeth of the gale, which had shifted to W.N.W. It was not blowing so hard as it had been, but the sea was quite as high, and it was out of the question to work the guns to any

purpose, so we kept on our course at about ten knots, until we saw the enemy well abaft the beam, then we slackened to eight knots. At times I took the con, but more often I was below on the main-deck seeing to our innumerable leaks. The plugs and plates were continually starting, especially the former, and it took no small labour to keep the main-deck at all dry.

At sunset the weather was as thick and the sea as high as ever, though the gale was still lessening, and accordingly we kept about the same relative positions, the enemy being to port about 3,000 yards off, three points abaft the beam. The *Hornet* now went off to discover what she could about the damages which they had sustained, and possibly to keep things lively on her own account, but the sea was too heavy to give her much chance of doing anything. Our remaining torpedo launch had been left with the prize (if indeed she had lived through the gale, which was more than doubtful), so she could be of no further use.

As soon as the night had fallen the enemy seemed to become apprehensive of our movements, for they were continually flashing round their search-lights. Occasionally they played on our ship, but not for long; clearly they were not looking for us. We had only one search-light left fit for service, but we now began playing it on the enemy, hoping, at least, to dazzle him and help the *Hornet* in this way. The mountainous seas continually obscured the rays, but still we could make out something of the enemy, and in this we were assisted to some extent by their own lights. For some time this went on, and then the *Hornet* in her turn brought her search-light to bear, and by its help we could make out more clearly not only the position of the enemy, but also the damage done to him. The *Charlemagne* was nearest to us, keeping carefully between us and the *Jauréguiberry*, and clearly intending to cover her as much as possible. This alone would have told us that the *Jauréguiberry* was badly damaged, even if we had not been able to see by the dancing gleams of the lights that two of her heavy guns—the forward gun and that in the starboard sponson—were dismantled, and the two forward turrets of her 14-cm. guns apparently destroyed altogether. Her forward bridge was wrecked, and the upper part of one funnel shot away, but both her masts were still standing, and as far as we could guess from her motion in the sea way she was not at all waterlogged. As I stood by the side of the skipper watching her, he remarked that she seemed all right between wind and water, and I could only say that for my part I had never hoped to hit

her belt and had aimed at her turrets. 'Very well,' was the answer, 'she will give us so much less trouble to get her home.'

The *Charlemagne* had not lost any of her heavy guns, and seemed as light and handy as her consort; clearly she was going to be our real opponent. But she had by no means escaped from our fire; her midship bridges were wrecked, a large portion of her flying-deck aft had sunk down upon the spar-deck; there were open gaps along her midship battery where the 3-inch plating seemed to have been blown away bodily, and we could not make out a single 14-cm. gun fit for action. Besides this both her funnels were pierced in many places, and steam-pipes, wind-sails, and such like fittings seemed to be as much cut up as ours, which is saying a great deal.

It was weary work trying to make out these things by the eerie flashes of the dancing light. Search-lights are dazzling enough at all times, but when they are dancing wildly with the motion of the ships and constantly obscured by drifting spray or masked by heavy seas, they give a sort of blinking effect, which is most trying. All that I know is that I hope the French eyes ached as much as mine did before midnight. After that time it was better, because there was less sea and spray, and, besides, we had learnt as much as we could, and there was consequently less need to observe carefully.

Towards morning the skipper made me lie down for a couple of hours, and when I woke it was already dawn. There was little or no wind and the swell had gone down considerably, but a fiery dawn, and at times the distinct 'sob' of the coming tempest, told us that we had not seen the last of the gale. The Captain asked me if I thought we could work the heavy guns in that sea, and on my saying that I thought we could very well, he replied, 'Well, then, it is time for action, for we shall not be very long without something worse than this. You may beat to quarters.'

The ship was already clear for action, and but a very few minutes passed before all were at quarters and the ship inspected. The enemy were now four points on our port beam in line ahead, the *Charlemagne* leading. Keeping so we could just train the forward guns to bear on her, but the skipper was not contented. As soon as full steam was reported, and before we two went to our places, he said that he did not mean another running fight. He meant to keep slightly across the enemy's bows, so as to rake him with all four guns at once. In this way he thought that we should bring the matter to a swift conclusion before the gale burst,

which would not be very long. He was undoubtedly right there, for the western sky was already covered with a thick bank of purplish grey cloud, and there was that peculiar hush in the air which so often comes just before a heavy squall.

We went to our places, the skipper conning her from the after shield. In a minute or two she starboarded a point or so, and the word was given for the great guns to begin. There was no attempt to use the Maxims, for the enemy's upper works were practically crippled already, and the work in hand was to attack her turrets and armour. As the firing began the captain's voice spoke through the telephone, 'Aim at her forward turret.' I ventured to suggest that I should try to fire rather lower and cut up her belts. 'No! no! no!' was the answer. 'I don't want to sink her. We can net the brace of them, and I mean to do it!' So we kept our sights on the turret as well as the motion of both ships would allow and fired slowly—not more than three shots per minute per gun—whenever we could be tolerably sure of our aim. As soon as the fire began the enemy replied with all four guns, but their aim was not good. One of our masts was shot away below the top and went overboard, but that was all; and that single broadside was the only reply she made to us. Long before another could be fired we were so far across her bows that her after guns could not bear, and as for her forward guns, well, a lucky round of ours—that is to say, from my two guns—sent both shells just through the dome-shaped roof of the turret as she dipped on the swell. She kept straight on her course, apparently relying on her torpedoes, for we saw three or four flash along the water towards us, but we were just out of range. Two or three more shells struck the turret and one, at least, its armoured base, and then, just as we had crossed her bows, the last rounds from my guns went home somewhere—we could not tell exactly where, but the flash and the smoke of the shells were visible through the top of the turret.

'Those guns are used up anyway, sir,' said the sub. by my side, and apparently the enemy thought so too, for the next minute we saw her bows fall off, and she was bearing away before the wind and sea. Doubtless she meant to bring her after turret into action again, but it looked exactly as if she was trying to escape, and a cheer went up from every man who saw it, a cheer that was taken up along fighting and platform decks, and I fancy that for the moment we all thought that the fight was over.

As soon as she fell off the *Centurion* came round too, just sending her some five or six shots, as we were broadside on, and then standing after her in pursuit. We were now on her starboard quarter, the *Jauréguiberry*, who had not changed course with her flagship, coming up hand over hand on the other side of her, and training over her port and after heavy guns to bear on us. 'Never mind her,' shouted the captain, from the wreck of the forward bridge just astern of me, 'she's too far off; lay your guns on the flagship.' Apparently he had left the after shield in order to see the chase better, and now he came down and stood on the cleats just behind me, ordering me to con ship through the telephone.

For a minute or two we kept on our new course; my sub. was just sighting on the flagship when we saw the flash and smoke of the guns of the *Jauréguiberry*. The captain laughed: 'We'll attend to her in a——'gad, what's gone now?' There was a roar and crash somewhere below, and then the white steam came eddying up through hatches and gratings in stifling clouds; we felt the motion of the engines stop, and her head swung round to port. 'Meet her—meet her sharp; pass the word to know what's wrong.' I shouted the words along the telephone, and in a minute the answer came back, 'Shell in the port engines—two cylinders smashed and the slide gear gone.' The starboard engines now began to move again, and by putting her helm well over on that side we could manage to keep her under control, but that was all.

To add to our perplexity the storm now burst over us. There was a dazzling lightning flash, and then a thick screen of rain hid the enemy from our eyes. We could see nothing but the angry seas close around us, flecked with the white manes of the sea mares, and rising and sharpening at the crests every moment. Then the gale came down on us nearly dead aft, driving down the stifling steam clouds until even we on deck found it difficult at times to know what we were doing. 'Lay your guns over to port,' said the captain, 'we shall want them now; and pass the word to have the feed-gear supplied with cartridges. I will go aft and con her from there; you fire low as soon as you get your guns to bear, and if that craft touches us stand by to board.' With these words he left us and went aft.

The squall of rain passed over rapidly and showed us the enemy, first the *Jauréguiberry* some eight cables off on our port beam, obviously heading up to ram, and then the *Charlemagne*



a long way ahead, but circling round to starboard as if intending to ram on that side if the other failed, and firing some machine guns at something which we could not see—probably the *Hornet*. We could not think of her; the other was drawing up at full speed. Every second we could see more clearly the red point of her ram lifting amid the foam round her bows as she rose on the swell. She was now but five cables off. We laid fair on that advancing ram and began to fire. Loud along our decks rang the cry, 'Ready away, boarders.' A torpedo or two from the enemy flashed away somewhere, or, at least, I was told so afterwards—at the moment I had neither eyes nor ears for anything but that sharp stem. Through the blinding rain and spray, through the incessant flame from the great muzzles in front of me, I watched it draw nearer and nearer, the white smother around her now flying before the gale, now leaping up in columns of spray and smoke from our bursting shell; would she touch us or not? Now she was within three cables; she lifted her forefoot clear out of the water as she rose on a giant billow, and as she lifted it I saw two shots strike just by the point of her ram. She dipped on the instant, and as quick as thought we were ready again waiting for her to rise on another wave, but now she faltered and swerved, and then she seemed to rise higher than before. Crash went our shells into that rising bow, and still it faltered and rose; then I saw what was happening, and asked leave through the telephone to cease firing on the sinking ship. Answer there was none, but the howling of the wind and sea, and the shrill rattle-rattle of some machine guns in the foretops of the sinking foe. Now she swung round head to sea, and nearly broadside on, a short cable's length off, heeling heavily over towards us, and raising her bows high in the air. We could see her crew crowding her shattered decks, and tumbling in heaps into her scuppers; and as we tossed on the seas we seemed to look right down into the black vortex closing round her. There was a roar as of bursting boilers; a murky torrent of water and ashes spouted up through her funnels, then the waves rolled over her in an angry swirl, and the great ship was gone.

We were rolling on the edge of that swirl in a way that threatened to have the guns off their sides. I was singing out to secure them with the electric brakes when a voice shouted, 'Look out, sir, she's right aboard us!' I turned at the word, and sure enough, through the driving scud, close on our starboard, loomed the huge shadow of the *Charlemagne*.

'Hard over ; continue the firing,' was the word. Alas ! it was easily said, but as for the ship she was like a log, and what a time it seemed before the guns came round ! At last we got ours round, and all four swept her point blank almost at the same minute. She swerved and faltered ; again the roar of the great guns and the crash and rattle of the bursting shell thundered out together. There was a shock and a hollow boom somewhere near our bows, and a great column of water spouted up, flooding everything forward. Again the great guns roared, there was another shock, this time astern, and another waterspout all speckled with splinters and pieces of plating ; then somehow or other the two ships fell on board each other, broadside on.

In another minute every man that could move was on her decks. It was just one jump and rush and that was all, for every living thing on her seemed to have been slain or stunned by the terrible blast of our point-blank broadsides. For myself, I don't know how I got out of the gun-shield, or exactly how things happened. I remember something of catching up a light line as I jumped aboard, and then seeing the boatswain make fast a hawser ; but the first thing I can recollect distinctly is finding myself by her after turret with the master-at-arms and two or three men, while a young officer in the uniform of a *capitaine de vaisseau* steadied himself against the turret and attempted to summon strength enough to give up his sword. I begged him to spare himself, and looked round for our own people.

The deck behind me was one confused mass of wreck and *débris* ; here and there a maimed figure was trying to crawl into some shelter from the drenching wet, but otherwise hardly a man was to be seen. The two ships were fast to each other, thumping and grinding together at every roll, and swaying about in a fashion that might make both of them broach to at any moment. I tried to find some steering gear on board the prize ; the only thing that I could discover was the stump of a binnacle and the supports from which a wheel had been blown away, while close by lay a mangled figure in the uniform of a rear-admiral of France. As I stumbled about among the wreck I came across our marine officer.

'Where are your fellows ?' said I.

'Below, some of them ; it's all right there—they've got the magazines and they will soon clear the engines—you look to our craft.'

'Where's the skipper ?

‘I don’t know; isn’t he here on deck?’

Without a word I took one flying jump back aboard the *Centurion*, and there, by the after barrette, I found him stretched out on his face on the deck stone-dead. Some of the engine-room people were coming on deck blackened and dripping from the water that was flooding the engine-rooms; they lifted the dead body and laid it out in some sort of shelter by the wrecked after bridge.

Our decks were strewn with the bodies of our men, for as they mustered to board the *Jauréguiberry* they had been mown down like grass by the fatal fire of her machine guns. I looked below to see what state the ship was in, and a glance told me all. The bulkheads had been started fore and aft by the shock of those two torpedoes, and through the gratings of the fighting decks I could see the water dashing about and rising visibly every instant. The stokeholes must be already flooded and the fires drowned; happily the steam wastes were all open, so the boilers would not burst. I called the few hands left on board, and we managed to save the ship’s log and papers and the paymaster’s books in spite of the water that dashed every minute along her main-deck through her shattered stern and bulkheads. Then ordering all hands to save themselves on board the prize, I ran on deck and hauled down her ensign, bending on and hoisting instead her storm ensign, for at least the old ship should sink with colours flying. She now gave a heavy plunge and the sounds of the water within her told me that there was not a moment to spare; I gathered up the ensign and, as she lifted, jumped back on board the prize. I suppose I had been away some seven or eight minutes. Then with one last look to see that no one was left on board I gave the word to cast her off. Instantly the two ships swung apart, and we saw her broach to and heel to starboard, with the running seas breaking heavily upon her ruined decks, sweeping away the wreckage and the corpses. She made a feeble attempt at recovery, then she settled down lower, and the grey veil of a driving squall hid from us the end of our dear old craft. When it passed, all that was left were some wreaths of steam flying away on the gale from an eddy in the tossing waves.

For a minute I stood looking at those flying wreaths with our dead captain’s words ringing in my ears: ‘Not necessary yet—a decent burial.’ Truly both he and they had found a worthy coffin and a fit funeral service. ‘We can net the brace of them.’ Truly we had done so, but not as he had hoped. And so they

were gone: our noble old ship, whom we loved and trusted; our gallant chief, whom I for one believed in as I never shall others. And even while I stood looking after her some of our fellows hoisted her ensign over the tricolour, and there we kept it in spite of the gale that threatened to tear it to ribbons.

Well, I won't write any more to-night. It is some time past now, but the bitterness and the sorrow of it comes back as if it were an hour ago.

A nice state we were in on that wretched prize. As I said, all her upper works were completely wrecked. The only things apparently uninjured were the massive structures of her turrets, and her mainmast, which was still standing and carried the bunting. Her wheel-houses, conning-house, 'director tower,' and so forth, had either simply vanished into indescribable wreck, or else were standing, smashed and gutted. Her great flying-deck had fallen upon her spar-deck, and was creaking and swaying with the motion of the ship as if it would fetch away altogether.

The first thing to be done was to find some means of controlling her helm; clearly the steering gear on deck was past hope, so I went below, into a state of things which surpassed my wildest dreams. Not a gun was left serviceable between decks; nine-tenths of her crew had been blown into every shape into which 'high' explosives can twist and shatter human flesh and bone; her main and battery decks were smashed into great holes, even the beams being wrenched and twisted; her sides were in some places rent, in others blown away altogether; and though her belts seemed fairly whole, her protective deck was cut through in many places by the heads or splinters of shell. Through her torn sides the heavy seas were flooding her every moment, and great masses of water were finding their way into her hold. Amid this scene were huddled here and there some prisoners with our blue-jackets and marines on guard over them; but guard and prisoners alike were chiefly occupied in keeping clear of the loose plates and beams which were continually shifting or going adrift altogether with the motion of the ship.

I made my way as well as I could towards her engine-rooms, which had by this time been occupied, and there found one of our assistant engineers and some of our engine-room staff making out the details of the strange machinery. They were just getting the steam pumps to work, and it was none too soon, for the water was already rising rapidly below the cranks, and if something were not

done the seas would quickly swamp her. So I told the engineer to keep the pumps going, and then to keep her under way with what steam she could spare, so as to lessen as much as possible the risk of her broaching to. On my asking where her steering engines were I got no answer at first, but at that moment there came up my senior sub.—I cannot say how glad I was to find him still alive—and said that he had found duplicate steering engines, both in gear and both remaining motionless, as they had been set when the connections were shot away. He had already set about rigging fresh connections, and had come forward to see what materials he could get. This was good news at all events; so with a word of hearty thanks, and bidding him look sharp about it, I made my way forward towards her stokeholds. Here the fight was only just over; the French stokers and engineers had barricaded themselves with some vague notion of holding out as long as possible, and our people had blocked the air-locks and inlets to stifle them out—a process which had had its effect by the time I got there. And now that they had surrendered many were too exhausted, and all were too sullen, to lift a hand to save themselves or us. Seeing the state of things I called for all our stokers who had boarded, and for A.B.'s to help, and thus got the after stokeholds manned, the assistant engineer and the chief stoker stationing the men, while I took stock of the coal left. It was not a cheering sight: the days of fight had nearly emptied her bunkers, and there was barely coal for twenty-four hours' steaming left, not indeed enough for that if the steam pumps were to be kept going. So I ordered them to let out the fires in the fore stokeholds, and to keep the pumps and engines going with the others as best they could until the steering gear should be refitted. Then going on deck I mustered our people, and found that of all our ship's company five officers—that is to say, the marine officer, the sub-lieutenant, two middies and myself—and 112 engineer and warrant officers and men only were left alive, counting the men on guard and in the stokeholds. The three or four minutes when they were standing ready to board under the fire of crippled enemies had cost more lives many times over than all the long and hard fighting that had gone before it. The only thing that could be said was that the French crew had fared far worse—of them there was barely a sixth left, even if the engine-room staff and stokers were counted. Many of the survivors both French and English were wounded, and now that the excitement of the fight was over, and the reaction had come, all seemed so

utterly worn out as hardly to care whether they lived or died. To let them remain like this would be fatal, so, learning from the marine officer that the cabins astern were fairly intact, I ordered an ambulance to be started in the ward-room, and all the wounded, French and English alike, to be carried there. The French admiral we laid in the state cabin aft, and the captain we carried to the driest state-room that there was, and got one of the ship's surgeons—the only one left alive—to attend upon him. Poor fellow, he was perfectly unconscious, and so for the present, at least, he was spared the bitterness of his crushing defeat. This gave work to some of the men; the rest I called to help me in clearing the wreck. She was still moving ahead, and by jockeying the screws now and again we kept her from actually breaching to, but that was all. She pitched and rolled frightfully, and I began to think that she would either capsize or founder unless we lightened her in some way.

So first we set to work on the forward bridge and flying-deck, and by watching our opportunity as she lurched we contrived to start a good deal of the wreck overboard. Above all, we got rid of the ruins of the great foremast and the upper part of the forward funnel. Up to this point the French prisoners worked fairly well with us, but when it came to throwing guns overboard they refused to stir a hand and became openly insubordinate. Well, if they would not work they should not be a nuisance, so we drove them down below and posted three files under the master-at-arms, with orders to fire at once on the least attempt at mutiny. Then we set to work, and one by one we got overboard most of the 14-cm. guns and some of the smashed beams and plates that cumbered the battery-deck.

By this time some temporary connections were rigged to the steering engines, and a wheel fitted on the solid base of the after turret just forward of the turret itself. The sub-lieutenant took the helm, and the ship was once more under control, and, besides, she was perceptibly relieved by the lightening of her top-hamper. But notwithstanding this our prospects were very bad. Night was falling and it was blowing harder than ever, with a fearful sea. Every minute she took in green seas, which went thundering through her ruined decks. The steam-pumps worked their best, but the water was steadily rising in the hold, and it was becoming clear that at this rate she could not live much longer. Hitherto we had kept a bright look-out for the *Hornet*, keeping



the ensigns flying that she might know the state of affairs when she sighted us, but not a trace of her had been seen, and now it leaked out from some of the prisoners that they had seen her sink under the fire of their machine guns just before they fell aboard us. This was pleasant news, for in my own mind I had hoped that she would have taken us off this wretched prize, or at least brought us some help before we foundered. Now that hope was vain.

I went round the cabins astern ostensibly to see the ambulance, but really to see whether the stern was sound enough to stand being pooped if I put her before the sea. On my way, partly from motives of civility, partly to conceal my real business, I paid a visit to the French officers, of whom every single survivor was in the ambulance badly wounded. If it had not been so, we should have had less trouble in dealing with their men. The captain I found conscious, but very weak, and therefore I excused myself from talking much. His own servant was dead, and so I called for a man to attend upon him, and it did not tend to raise my opinion of our prisoners that they seemed to think it our business to nurse their wounded chief. However, anything was better than unwilling service in such a matter, and so, making allowance for the demoralisation of exhaustion and defeat, I told off one of our own bluejackets for the duty. In the ward-room I found the same sort of thing. The French surgeon complained that his own people refused to obey him, and I sent a boatswain's mate and six men to help our own surviving ward-room servants, who were already at work. The whole stern seemed fairly dry, and, at all events, much more capable of keeping out the seas than her shattered bows. So returning to the spar-deck I first lowered the hunting—there was no use in keeping that aloft any longer—and then, watching my opportunity, I put her helm up. She answered pretty well, but as she came round something 'took charge' forward with a force that threatened to capsize her. Then she got fairly before the sea and the worst was over. We were pooped every minute, as I had expected, but the deadlights were shipped everywhere astern, and the after turret prevented the weight of the seas from going forward, and thus she took much less into her hold than previously. We soon found that the pumps were able to keep the water under, and then leaving a midshipman to con ship in place of the sub., who was exhausted, I went forward to see what had 'taken charge' as we went about.

On getting to her bows I found the two great guns in the fore turret trailing about with their muzzles on her deck, one looking a good deal longer than the other, and obviously, therefore, loose from its slide. Getting some men forward we took a turn with a hawser round both guns and moored them in this fashion, doing our best to wedge the dismounted gun so that she should not slip forward. Then we got into the turret through its ripped roof to see what was the matter with the mountings, but that was all we could do. Inside, ladders, fittings, and everything else appeared a perfect chaos; we could make out that more than one of our shells had pierced the base of the turret, and that it was almost fatal to explore the wreck while the ship was plunging in that sea; so, trusting to our moorings to hold the guns, we got out of the turret and went aft.

All night long I was on the alert, for I had not the least notion where we were. We had now been forty-eight hours without any observations, and our dead reckoning was completely upset by the manœuvring of the fight. Every compass on board was shot away, and all that we had to steer by was the pocket compass which you gave me—we never thought then that it would do such service. By its aid we knew that we were scudding nearly E. by S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. before a terrible gale, which would take us somewhere near the Gut of Gibraltar, but whether into the Gut or on shore we could not tell in the least. All that I could do was to keep a bright look-out for breakers ahead, and hope for the best.

In the morning there came fresh cause for anxiety. The assistant engineer reported that he had no coal left to keep way on her and the pumps going, and unless he could do this it was clear that our moments were numbered. We set to work and passed down everything that would burn that we could find, and with this sorry shift we kept steam up in a fashion until the evening, the weather continuing as bad as ever.

I was standing conning ship by our improvised wheel with the marine officer by my side, looking out at the fast falling night. Neither of us spoke, but I fancy our thoughts were pretty much to the same effect, that whether we lived or died the sooner the thing was over the better, when there was a sudden hail of 'Sail ho!' Far ahead we could see two indistinct blotches on the swiftly narrowing offing; we could make out their lights with some difficulty, but without showing lights or signal of some kind ourselves we could not hope that they would see us. Guns had been thrown

overboard or were useless ; search-lights we had no current for ; all that we could do was to show flares from the fighting tops of the mainmast, and I remember now that I laughed grimly at the notion of the proud flagship reduced to showing flares like a Yarmouth smack. After a time our flares were seen, and the new-comers bore down and proved to be H.M. ships *Crescent* and *Brilliant*, sent by the admiral to obtain news of the enemy's squadron. The *Crescent* immediately sent us hawsers and took us in tow, going dead slow, and then, notwithstanding the seas, the boats of both ships began to take off the people on board. First we sent off the prisoners, then the wounded, then all that we could spare of our own people, and fortunately got only one boat stove in doing it. Then the captain of the *Crescent* came on board, and, looking at the water-logged wreck, suggested to me to abandon her. I could not do it ; she seemed to me the only relic of our lost *Centurion*, and I begged to be permitted to save her if I could. He said that he would do his best—he thought that in six hours he could tow us to Gibraltar, if I could so long keep her afloat. I was willing to try, and the sub-lieutenant and engineer and some thirty hands volunteered to stay with me and share the risk and toil. Then the captain went off on board his own ship and put her to her best speed, while we did our best to keep the pumps going. It was terrible work, for we had only one stokehold manned, and there the men were more than knee-deep in water, and were feeding the furnaces with scraps of planking or anything else that could be found. For myself I was at the helm all the time, and it seemed a lifetime before I saw dimly some lights around us and felt our sinking craft touch ground in the Bay.

In a very few minutes man-o'-war boats were alongside, but they were not the *Crescent's*. We did not stop to think ; just as we were, dripping, dirty, exhausted, we tumbled into them and were pulled aboard a stately ship. I remember being helped up her ladder, and finding a crowd assembled at the gangway to cheer us. I remember, too, that somehow the cheer died away and we were received in dead silence. And the next thing I knew was that I was in bed in a comfortable state-room, with C—— and a staff surgeon standing by my bedside.

I recollect C—— telling me that the *Latouche Tréville* was all right, and the doctor saying that he would not have any talking, and that the only things he would suffer me to do that day were eating and sleeping, and then I have a hazy notion that I took him at his word.

This letter must go now if the *Crescent* is to take it to England. Farewell ! You shall hear very soon the little there is left to tell.

## LETTER VII.

Portsmouth.

You have seen our safe arrival in the papers, and you have doubtless also seen the *Gazette*. It is all very satisfactory, only I hope C—— won't grudge me my post rank and C.B. I am very glad of the way they have treated my sub. ; he is a very smart, steady fellow, and I hope to have him under me again. Everyone else deserves his promotion ; it is a capital thing that they have found a comfortable berth on shore for the master-at-arms ; it will be doubly welcome to him, as I know that he is engaged to be married. The engineer is well provided for, but he deserves it all and more.

To go on with where I left off. The next morning (or at least I suppose it was so) after that first awakening I found myself, as I thought, quite strong enough to be about, so I turned out and hunted for some clothes, but could not find any ; it was clear that my friend the doctor did not mean me to go about without his leave, so I turned in again. In a short time came the ward-room steward with some breakfast, and I asked him to get me my things. He said yes, he would, but rather dubiously, and disappeared promptly. Then I went on with my breakfast lazily until I was interrupted by a tap at the door, and the doctor appeared, and with him another officer in a vice-admiral's buttons and stripes. I had never before seen him, but by photographs and descriptions I recognised at once the Mediterranean commander-in-chief. He greeted me warmly, saying that he had called early, but could only take the very first opportunity of visiting the chief survivor of so great a success. Then he asked the doctor if I was fit for talking, and having got a satisfactory answer, he sat down and heard the whole story from me. Only he would not hear one word of regret for the *Centurion*. Had she not sunk in her duty, and what better fate could befall her ?

When I had finished, he put a great many questions, chiefly about the working of the automatic guns and their effect. I told him all that I knew of the working, and what I had seen of the effect on board the *Charlemagne* ; and then, after some little reflection, he said that the new weapons seemed to have had a crucial test and stood it well ; they would change the whole conditions

of maritime war—of that there was no doubt. Then he left me, asking me for a written report as soon as I could finish it.

Soon afterwards the doctor returned and got me fitted out in borrowed clothes—for you know that I had lost everything but the things which I stood up in, and those were utterly spoilt by dirt and wet—and introduced me to the ward-room of the *Royal Oak*, where I got a most cordial welcome. Then I went forward with the first lieutenant to see the people who had stuck to me during those last hours. The sub-lieutenant and engineer were still in the doctor's hands, but both seemed as comfortable as they could be, and long and hearty were our greetings. The A.B.'s had been formed into messes by themselves by the chief's special order until the *Centurion* could be once more afloat—on paper; and again I was welcomed in a way that made me feel very much ashamed of deserving it so little.

On the first opportunity I paid a visit to the French captain, whom I found badly wounded, but able to receive visits and apparently glad to see me. He was good enough to think himself indebted to me for attentions on board the prize, and we were soon on the best of terms. He said that on passing Gibraltar they had no notion that there was a battle-ship in port, and that on that first night the *Latouche Tréville* was merely on the look-out for torpedo craft. The terrible fire that disabled her was the first warning to them that a serious encounter was at hand, and even then they did not realise the weapons with which they had to do. Confident in their own power and speed, they gave chase the next morning, expecting only a short stern chase and an easy conquest; and the first thing which undeceived them was that brief fight in which we lost our conning-house. It seemed that the two ships (the *Jauréguiberry* and the *Charlemagne*) were about eight cables apart, ranging up on either quarter of the *Centurion*, when she suddenly threw herself across the bows of the former and crippled her in less time than it takes to write it. On board the *Charlemagne* it seemed perfectly incomprehensible, and accordingly she stood after us, not without hope, and in her turn she was perfectly demoralised in a couple of minutes or so. The damage on board her in that first fight was awful—her midship battery was completely disabled, chiefly by the loss among the crews, and the nerves of the survivors were so utterly shaken that the captain and officers, and even the admiral himself, could not prevail on them to work the secondary armament again. But it was, after all, not so much the actual damage

done as the appalling volume of our fire that impressed them. That evening the French admiral had issued an order pointing out that they were clearly confronted with unknown weapons of tremendous power, and that, if attacked again, their only adequate means of defence was the ram, and, therefore, that both ships must endeavour to ram in concert at all hazards.

In the last fight he told me that our fire was nearly as disastrous in its effects as it had been before. Their secondary armament was useless; but the crews of their heavy guns were working in some sort of security, which was rudely disturbed by the ruin of their forward turret. He was standing by the admiral when the *Jauréguiberry* sank, and he said that they looked at each other without a word. The admiral had been killed by a shell just before they fell aboard us; the point-blank fire of our guns had completely swept the *Charlemagne* above the belt; she was absolutely out of control, and it was almost by accident that we had been torpedoed or the ships had fallen aboard each other as they did; himself he had expected nothing better for the *Charlemagne* than the fate of the *Jauréguiberry*, and he did not know how she had escaped it.

There were two officers from the *Tréhouart* among the wounded, and their account was even stronger. Left to attend the damaged *Latouche Tréville*, they were too far distant to know what had befallen the first division, and they advanced to meet us, expecting, no doubt, a serious contest, but not what they really found. Our first fire, before the ships changed courses, had wrecked her fore turret, and the uptakes of both funnels, besides clearing her upper deck of every living thing. Then when she had starboarded, and was rolling in the trough of the sea, she was hit in less than forty seconds by five 12-inch shells, two of which burst among her engines, and two certainly, if not all the three others, had gone right through her, and burst in her double bottom. One and all agreed that, but for the accident which disabled half our engine power, we should have taken or sunk every one of their ships without any serious damage or difficulty. And the general view seemed to be that our captain made a serious mistake in not running amuck that first night after disabling the *Latouche Tréville*, when he could readily have come to close quarters in the fog, and would have found them quite unprepared to encounter a battle-ship.

The officers of the *Latouche Tréville* all complained that their admiral and the captains of the battle-ships ought to have paid



more attention to the first fight with their ship than they really did. They had counted the flashes of twelve shots from our heavy guns in twenty-five seconds; and those shots left them with five out of their eight turrets wrecked, their starboard engines disabled, their upper works cut to pieces, and three great leaks in the belt. And yet the officers of the battle-ships persisted in putting all this down to quick-firing guns. They knew the Elswick 8-inch quick-firing guns, and made up their minds that the enemy must be a cruiser heavily armed with weapons of that type. Disabled as they were, the slaughter caused by our Maxim broadside in the second encounter was terrible, and as soon as they saw that the *Charlemagne* could not relieve them, they had nothing to do but to strike, and save further bloodshed.

There were two things which impressed me greatly in these conversations: the first was that, however dearly our victory had been won, and however bitterly we might feel the loss of our noble craft and our gallant shipmates, still there is a fearful difference between a battle won and a battle lost; the other was the only gleam of fun in the whole story. You may remember that on board the prize we had to tell off some of our own people to attend the ambulance. It seemed that the French surgeon was terribly at a loss for broth, or at all events something hot for the wounded. The galleys were destroyed, and the Frenchmen, sullen and crushed by weariness and defeat, would not lift a hand, so our people set to work to try what they could do, and it was equally amusing to see the surprise of the French officers at the fact of an Englishman cooking anything, especially amid such surroundings, and the struggle between politeness and veracity in describing the result.

The *Charlemagne* was perfectly sound up to her protective deck, and was pumped dry and got into dock without much trouble. Then they repaired her sufficiently to stand the voyage to England, and so we brought home both our prizes.

And now you have the whole story of our short but eventful commission. For me it has been unmixed good fortune, but I know that I would gladly give rank and decoration, and all the rest of it, a dozen times over to get our noble old *Centurion* back from her quiet berth in the deep Atlantic.

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## APPENDIX.

This account of the refitting of the *Centurion* is submitted with much diffidence, especially as it has been written without any knowledge of the present distribution of weights in her design. Roughly speaking, the idea is that the weight of the 8-inch belt would be equal to that of the present belts, and the weight of the turtle-back to that of the present protective deck; that the removal of the casemates shields and military masts would save the weight required for the Maxims and the extra ammunition; and that in rebuilding the barbette towers weight might be economised which would counterbalance the increased weight of the heavy guns.

This last point clearly depends on the design for the automatic gear; and the present work, though not meant as a treatise on the subject, would be incomplete without some indication of what is intended.

The first, if not the main, point in the design is that it purports to effect a considerable saving in the weight and cost of the springs. It is well known that quick-firing guns are now mounted on slides, and the force of their recoil is taken on springs, which immediately send the gun back to the firing point on the slide, no matter what may be its elevation; it may not be so generally known that the present idea of the Government and the manufacturers is to mount the 12-inch 46-ton gun in the same way. Now, as an angle of 35° of muzzle elevation is required, and the springs are relied on to hold the gun at the firing-point on the slide when at that elevation, it is clear that springs of enormous initial compression—that is to say of enormous and, in fact, prohibitive weight and cost—are required.

It is proposed to avoid this difficulty in the following manner. The gun will be mounted on a slide and held at the firing point by an electric brake, so that whatever the elevation its weight does not rest on the springs. On firing the current is reduced in the electric brake, and the recoil is taken on the springs, with such assistance from the brake as may be required. Then the gun is urged forward on its return by one set of springs, while another set are held back; this motion past the second set of springs produces a stroke. This stroke at its commencement, while the springs are still at their ultimate power, or nearly so, works an

elevating ram, which by means of an automatic adjusting gear gives the varying stroke required to bring the slide from any firing elevation to one rather above the horizontal bearing, at the same time throwing out of gear a corresponding elevator which has given the firing elevation. The gun then completes its return, travelling down an inclined plane, and when it reaches the firing-point on the slide is again held by the electric brake. Then, when required, the second set of springs are released, the first-mentioned elevator is thrown out of gear, and the second into gear again, and the slide and gun go to the firing elevation.

The two elevators correspond exactly, and the limit of the stroke given by each depends on the adjustment of its automatic gear. In each case—though it is only important with reference to the firing elevation—this adjustment may proceed whether the elevator is in gear or not, but it only takes effect on the gun if and when the elevator is in gear. Thus the officer in charge proceeds with his sighting without reference to the motions of the gun, which will be affected at the proper time, and not before, by what he does.

In this manner it is proposed to avoid springs of high initial compression, and at the same time to keep the sighting as continuous as it is with a 4·7-inch gun and its shoulderpiece. And here, if desired, the design may stop: if it be desired to have manual loading within the barbette, the elevators may easily be adapted to it without any sacrifice of principle; if it be desired to combine it with any particular form of breech-gear, the part of the stroke left unused is available to work it.

But the design referred to in the text goes a great deal further. It is briefly this: The unused portion of the stroke, after the gun has been brought to the proper elevation, as already described, and while it is gravitating to the firing point, first unscrews the breech-block, shielding the breech-screw at the same time, and then runs the breech-block out in a straight line backwards on sliding frames, extracting the old cartridge case (if used) as it goes. Then, when the second set of springs are released, the breech-block is run in, driving a complete new charge before it, the breech secured, and the elevators worked as before described. The sliding frames do not project beyond the breech of the gun when the breech-block is home; and though the loading takes place above the level of the barbette armour, there seems no objection to this, as no men are required, and the small amount of gear used is completely masked by the shield and the

trunnions of the gun-slide. And the result is that the barbette need only be large enough to allow sufficient clearance for the gun-slide and the recoil at high angles of fire, while the whole arrangement is readily accommodated in the balanced or cantilever type of shield or turret now so much in vogue.

This is not all. The ammunition service ought to consist merely of a tube-lift going round with the gun, and led up near the centre of the arc of training and delivering by an easy curve into a proper trough, which at the right time (and not at any other) is run by electric gear sideways into position between the breech-block and the gun. Beyond this there is no ammunition or gear for it above the protective deck, and accordingly the size of the lower portion of the barbette may be greatly reduced.

The recoil speed of the gun is about twenty-five feet per second. It is clear, therefore, that the rate of fire will practically be limited only by the supply of ammunition—*i.e.* by the power available to work the lift. As two or three charges might be raised at once, it is submitted that the rate of fire suggested in the text is not over-estimated, while the difference in precision caused by the uninterrupted training and sighting would be very great indeed.

JAMES EASTWICK.

## *Unspoken Water.*

SHE had stuck about half a dozen little green sticks into the earth, and was kneeling with her back turned to the road tying up four or five sprawling young carnation shoots. She did it carefully, fixing each as lovingly to its stick as Isaak Walton wished a worm to be fixed on a fishing-hook; then she loosened the earth all round the plant, broke up the hard knots, and let her eyes linger in enjoyment of the contrast between the freshly stirred earth and the vivid grey-green of the carnation.

'I'm just a-wondering when you are going to have a word or a thought to spare for me, Avice,' said a voice behind her, and in a moment Avice Lester, sweet and twenty, knew who was there, and her cheeks grew as bright as the roses by her side. She and Willie Brownlow had 'kept company' for six months, and Willie was now leaning over the low wall covered with stone-crop which divided her grandmother's back garden from the road, and gazing at her with eyes so full of love and admiration that her own fell down in confusion before them.

'You've most flayed me out o' my seven senses, Willie! How was I to know that you were there?'

'You'd have known fast enough if you hadn't been giving every thought in your mind to that one flower you are nursing up so hard! You've never let me come close up to you before without catching the sound o' my steps. Who gav' you the root on't?' he demanded jealously.

'Muster Markham, Clifford's head gardener at the Hall.'

'Oh, I ken well enough whose gardener Muster Markham is, and I ken too that he cam' from Lunden and is full o' fine Lunden talk. And there's another thing I'm aweer of, and that's how all you lasses in Burnhope parish never know how to think half enough of Muster Markham.'

'Oh, there you go!' cried Avice; 'you're as vexed as vexed can be all of a minute! What earthly need is there for you to

go on like that, just because Muster Markham he gav' me one poor little carnation root for to set in my garden? What's that to mak' such a fuss about?'

'Oh, nothing, I suppose! Just nothing at all. Of course you want it to shoot up fine. It's tied to be something out of the common if he gav' it to you. He's fra London, you see, and mebbe it's fra London too, and we're nobbut Yorkshire.'

'London or no London, and whether he gav' it to me or whether he didn't, I'm set on making a fine strong plant of it, for it's a real bonnie sort, and none like it has even been seen in these parts before. It's a lilac one, Willie; you can just see a bit of its colour peeping out at the tip of this bud. I want to have a nice little bunch of them by the Feast for to give to a lad I know.'

'And who might that be?' asked Willie eagerly.

'Oh, that's telling.'

'I want it to be telling, and to be tellt quickly.'

'We'll see when the time comes—it wants twelve days till then.'

'I can't wait all that time,' said Willie, with his bright brown eyes fixed still more anxiously on hers.

'Oh, come, Willie,' she pleaded, 'wait.'

'Answer!'

'No, you must wait till the Feast, and then if you will step along here as soon as you are fettled up for to go, happen you may find out.'

'They are for me, then, and you'll pin them in?'

'They are for you, then, and I'll pin them in, but bring a pin with you, for we'd have no luck if I gave you that.'

'You mak' me think sham' of myself, Avice. I can't think how I could be ill-tempered to you; it's just that I am so afeard o' lossing you.'

'No fear o' that, Willie.'

'I don't know; Muster Markham has got to your grandmother's soft side.' She's all for him, and warns me away fra the house with her black looks and hard tongue.'

'He has never so much as asked me.'

'But I'll awarrant he's asked her, and she has promised him all he wants. You'll have your own trouble with her; you're bound to have that. You see he's a grand Londoner with a good house rent free, and coals free and all, and rare good wages, and vegetables for the taking, and what he can make with little pick-



ings and sellings besides, and I'm nobbut a poor carpenter with my weekly wage and nought else.'

'Whisht, Willie, you're just talking foolishness! It's you I love, and it's you I'll have, and if Granny is so fond o' Muster Markham let her marry him herself. He's none so much too young for her, after all,' and as she spoke she looked at her Willie and wondered how the very handsomest and steadiest lad in all Burnhope parish could imagine that any girl would ever give him the go-by for the sake of a stuck-up foreigner who was five and forty if he was a day. And yet Avice's conscience pricked her a little all the while, for she could not but own to herself that she had been rather impressed by Muster Markham's grand manner. He had been under-gardener in a ducal establishment before he came to Burnhope Hall, and had, of course, had every opportunity of picking up an upper-class manner. So Avice thought, but though slightly dazzled by that fact, and by the *savoir faire* of a man who, when he gave her a nosegay, named it a *bouquet*, and always culled the flowers for it from the most highly heated of 'Clifford's' hot-houses, and always put a pretty cut paper round it, and tied it with long streaming ribbons as if she were one of the highest ladies in the land, in her heart she preferred the bunch of cabbage-roses that was sometimes picked for her with the shortest of short stalks by Willie, and was always hot from the grasp of his faithful hand.

'Well, I must be off,' he said reluctantly, 'or I'll be getting the sack. It's only a week ago that——' But here he exclaimed, 'Avice! I do believe she's coming! I am sure I heard the click o' the latch!'

'Hout Willie, no; I left her lying on the long settle, and she won't stir for no one.'

At that very moment, however, a short, resolute-looking old woman, dressed in black, with a large white mob cap with a black ribbon tied over it, and a small black and white checked shawl pinned tightly across her chest, came hurriedly down the narrow garden path. When she came to the point at which her words would reach the culprits more quickly than she herself could, she cried:

'I am coming for to know what sets Willie Brownlow here hanging over my garden wall just as if it was his own? As for you, Avice, I have told you over and over again that I will not allow such goings on, and, besides that, you know very well that there's work of all sorts in the house crying out to be done.'

'I am only looking after this plant that Muster Markham gav' me,' replied Avice, hoping thus to conciliate her. 'It's just going to flower.'

'Muster Markham's i' the hoose now, and he's brought you a rare big basketful of ripe strawberries. I's glad you have been taking good care of his plant. It's no more than your duty to him.'

Goaded by this, Willie imprudently exclaimed, 'It's her duty to me too, for she has promised to give me a bunch o' them flowers to wear in the breast of my coat at the Feast.'

'Oh, she has, has she?' said the old woman savagely, and her wan face flushed up, and a group of purple spots on her cheeks seemed to burn.

'Yes, I have,' interposed Avice boldly, 'and I don't see why I shouldn't.'

'H'm! Well, come your way in now, girl, you have lost more than enough time here already. I'll be bound for it, Muster Markham has been sitting waiting for you better than ten minutes!'

Avice, who knew that she must obey, rose, twisted her apron back to its place, darted a look of love and regret at her Willie, and then walked slowly back to the house, followed by her grandmother. Willie was the man she loved, but not even before Muster Markham could she appear when not at her best; so she darted upstairs saying, 'I must just wash my hands, Granny,' and thus gave Mrs. Walton an opportunity to tell Muster Markham that Avice had 'been and gone and promised that feckless Willie Brownlow a bunch of his handsome laylock carnations to smarten him up for the Feast,' and Muster Markham time to decide that this gift should not be made.

When Muster Markham was gone, Mrs. Walton fingered the succulent shoots of 'Clifford's' asparagus which constituted her portion of the gardener's present bounty, and remarked, 'That's a real nicé man, Avice, and a handsome-featured man, too!'

'Oh, I dare say he may have been well enough to look at five-and-twenty years ago,' replied Avice carelessly; 'he's a deal too old now for anyone to give a thought to his looks.'

'That's how you talk! I'd give all I'm worth to see you marry anyone half as well worth having.'

'He's a long way off being all you think him, Granny. He's full of his cracks and his boasts, and far too fond of giving away what's none o' his. As for wedding him, I'll never do it!'

'We'll see about that. You'll happen have to do what I bid you!' cried the old woman angrily.

Nothing more was said, but Avice found herself suddenly deprived of all opportunity of speaking to Willie. Her grandmother knew when his work was over, and never let her go out when there was the least chance of meeting him. She had, too, discovered their trysting place by the wall at the back of the cottage, and now kept a sharp look out in that direction. Seven days passed by without the lovers having so much as one glimpse of each other, except at church, and no day ever ended without a visit from 'Muster' Markham, even if it only lasted five minutes. He wooed the old grandmother with such of the kindly fruits of the earth as were to be obtained in 'Clifford's' gardens or hothouses. He wooed Avice with rare flowers and fruits, and stories of life under lordly roofs. She listened to these eagerly, for they set before her a gorgeous world of which she had hitherto formed no conception, but nothing ever prevented her from making an effort to escape to the garden wall at the time when she knew that Willie might be there. Once she saw him and began to hurry to him, but a peremptory voice called on her to return.

'Let me just go out for five minutes,' she pleaded; 'I feel to want a breath of fresh air.'

'A breath of fresh air, indeed! It's something else that you are feeling to want—something that you are a very great deal better without!' said the grandmother sternly. 'That's how your poor mother went on—that garden wall was the first beginning of all her troubles, too! Your father used to come leaning over it and talking about love, and palavering her, and in spite of all I could say, or do, she would have him. She married him when he was barely out of his time, and he had never thought of laying by so much as a penny. It was all they could do to keep a roof over their heads and live at all, and yet he must needs go and sit and drink life and soul away at the public. I seed her grow thinner and whiter and heart-broken every week, and she toiled and moiled, and fretted, and I had my husband on his dying bed and could do little to help her, and before long she was laid low i' the kirk-yard and I had to take you, her one bit bairn, and work and fight to keep life in both on us. That's eighteen years ago, and now, Avice, woman grown, you want to take and ruin your life just exactly the same way, and you want me to stand by and see you do it, and then be as broken-hearted as she was. I've blamed myself for one-and-twenty years for letting her cast life and

happiness away, but she begged me—she prayed me—she told me I was old and timorsome, and that everything was certain sure to go right, and she won me over to let her have her way, but I'll not see her bairn go the same trod and suffer the same sorrow that she did. Avice, my bairn, I've done my best to be kind to you; I lay you on your obedience to seek to have no underhanded meetings with young Brownlow.'

'But Willie is different; he is steady, he never goes into no public-houses. Willie——'

'Let Willie be; I am fairly sick of his name. The very most that he has is a comely face and a civil-spoken tongue. He's not established; he's too young to trust to for steadiness. At the best he's not worth marrying upon. I have chosen you a good, well-to-do, respectable, and responsible man, with plenty of brass, and it's him you must wed. It's your plain duty, both to yourself and me. Come, honey, say yes! I have a right to settle this. Haven't I spent time and strength and money on you ever since I took you to be my own?'

'Oh Granny, yes, I know, I know. I'll do anything in the world to please you, but give up Willie!'

'Why don't you say at once, anything in the world but what I want?'

The Flower Show and Feast were to take place in two days. The lilac carnations were certain to be in full beauty by that time—just enough of them for one handsome nosegay, but how was Avice to find an opportunity to give it? 'I will go out about five,' she thought at last, 'I will hide myself behind the lilacs at the top of the garden, and then slip down behind them to the corner of the wall. If I once get behind the trees safely, Granny will never suspect I am there. She won't start to watch me till seven, when Willie has done his work and got hisself fettled up a bit. I'll just stop there in hiding till he does come, and then I'll call him in a low voice and tell him where I am. When he comes to me I'll show him one of the lilac branches, and tell him that if he comes on the Feast morning he will find the flowers I want him to wear tied to it just out of sight of all passers-by.'

At four o'clock stray drops of rain began to fall; at five they were falling much faster. Avice was glad of it, for her grandmother mightily exalted the power of rain, and was firmly persuaded that no one could ever set foot outside the door in wet weather without rueing it till their dying day. She would probably think rain such

an effectual barrier against lovers' meetings that she would not even look into the garden at all, and yet the girl suffered keen anxiety while trying to make her way unobserved to her lurking place. If her grandmother had heard the back door open she would infallibly be on the watch, and discover this deeply laid scheme.

The lilac trees were, however, reached in safety.

All the way as she went Avice had pretended to be weeding a little, and now she crept under the bushes, weeding as she went while in sight, then she forced herself in between a thick wet bush and the wall, and on to the corner, sure of remaining there in safety if she had not been detected already.

No girl could have been happier than Avice when she had stood on the damp, spongy earth and leant against the damp cold wall for five minutes without hearing the dreaded voice. The rain now began to fall heavily. She was thankful that it did. It cooled her burning forehead, and made it absolutely certain that her grandmother would keep the house; but no sooner had she taken this comfort to her heart than she bethought herself that Willie also would most likely stay away, thinking it hopeless to seek an interview with her. She passed a dreary half hour with this thought for sole companion, and then through the dripping branches she saw him coming. He went to their old place by the wall, looked dismally around him, and then seemed to resign himself to waiting. Just as Avice was going to call him in a low voice to come to her, she heard a sound which made her heart stand still. Her awful grandmother was there! She had left the house in this heavy rain, and was standing by the wall speaking angrily to Willie. Once more Avice gently thrust aside the branches, and then she saw her. She had no umbrella, no protection of any kind. The rain had already beaten down the large round crown of her cap, and it and the soft starched frills, of which she had always been so proud, were now lying in a white pulpy mass on her head. She was not caring for the rain, she was bent only on heaping reproaches on Avice's Willie, whom she loved, and when the first tumultuous whirl of fright and emotion had partly passed away Avice was able to hear some of them.

'Here you are!' she cried, 'sneaking about a place that you are not allowed to set foot in; here you are, prowling about aback o' behint a respectable woman's house, trying to prevent a decent, well brought up girl rendering obedience to the grandmother who reared her when nobody else looked nigh hand her! It's sham'ful of you, I say, and it's sham'ful of her if she listens

to you! She shall never marry you, nor none like you. Why should she? She's a bonnie girl and a good one, except when she lets herself be led away by you, and she has a right to look for something a deal better nor anything you could give her. You ought to think sham' o' yourself for trying to drag her down like that.'

'No one will ever love her more nor I do, and I'd work my fingers to the bone for her.'

'Work your fingers to the bone, that's just talk, and as for love, it sickens me to hear the very name on't! That's the way her father talked when he courted my girl. Did his love keep him out of the public when he had got her? What's love? If it had any vally at all it would have kept him steady, and I shouldn't have had to see my daughter die broken-hearted at two-and-twenty, nor to take and rear her bairn when I had scarcely a mouthful o' bread for mysel'. Get away wi' your love and your love talk to them as wants them. It's not love that's wanted most when folks comes a-courting, it's good character, and a good bit of cash saved up and laid well away out at interest.'

'No one can say aught agin my character, and I've saved——'

'Nothing worth naming! You're a deal too young for that!'

'I am going to start for myself.'

'Start as soon as you like, you'll not start wi' my Avice to help you! She's promised elsewhere.'

'She hasn't promised herself!'

'Mebby not, but she will. Avice likes—— What's that?'

'That,' was Avice trying to force the lilacs aside to go and say that she loved Willie and Willie only, and would marry no one else. Such was her first impulse, her second was to stay where she was and catch Willie when her grandmother had gone, and tell him the truth, and arrange with him some safe method of communication for the future.

'I don't believe it!' said Willie, in despair.

'Wait till you see, then; Avice likes things decent and comfortable about her. You'll see, young man, and soon! Now please to quit my premises. I'm getting my death here in the wet, but not one step will I stir till you are gone!'

Avice hoped that he would pass by the place where she was standing, in which case she would, in a low voice inaudible to her grandmother, say something which would make him go out of sight for a while and then return; but he turned abruptly round, and began to retrace his steps to the village. In her despair,



she resolved to try to get round the garden behind the bushes, and out by the front gate, and after him before her grandmother reached the house; but just as she had all but succeeded in this, she heard the poor old woman fall heavily on the slippery path, and had to go to her aid. She was lying helplessly where she had fallen, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Avice raised her up and got her into the house.

There it was warm and comfortable, and Avice put her in her chair by the fire while she removed her drenched clothing. Her lips were blue, her teeth chattered, her complexion was grey. Avice got her into her bed, gave her hot bottles and warm tea, and when all these things had been done Mrs. Walton said, 'What you are doing is all to no use. I have got the death smit, and God forgive you, Avice, as I do, for it's along of you!'

Avice ran to get help from someone more used to deal with illness than she herself was, and soon returned with Susie Batson, a neighbour's wife, who promised to stay all night, and longer if needed, but shook her head when she saw the sick woman, and said, 'I'm afeared it's a case!'

Mrs. Walton let them do with her what they liked, and next morning it was the same. She was not unconscious, but never spoke, and never opened her eyes. Avice looked at her in silence and most miserable anxiety, and Susie looked at Avice with motherly pity.

'Don't take on so terrible, my bonnie bairn,' she said. 'You have nought to reproach yourself about in your behaviour to her. You have been a rare good girl to her, I *will* say that!'

'I am terr'ble afeard I havn't,' said Avice, and as she spoke her grandmother's eyes opened wide, and for the space of a minute or more rested on her with indescribable mournfulness, and then closed again.

'What's that?' exclaimed Avice about noon, when the sound of distant music reached her ears.

'It's the brass band playing in the park,' answered Susie. 'Have you forgotten t' flower-show?'

Avice had. Her whole soul was filled with the overpowering dread of having to live the rest of her life with one thought continually uppermost in her mind—the thought that she had killed the woman who had been as a mother to her.

'And by the bye, Avice, I've clean forgotten to tell you that Muster Markham—Clifford's head-gardener, you know—comed

here first thing this morning; it was just when you had dozed off like in the armchair after your long, long watch. He said that summut had gone wrong wi' some carnations as he was hoping to get a prize with, and that he had given you a plant of t' same sort, and must have t' flowers off it for to mak' up his twelve varieties, so rather than rouse you up I made bold to tell him to go and get what he wanted for hissel'—not that I think he would have taken no for an answer.'

'You did quite right,' said Avice, for to her mind now she and Willie were criminals who had killed her grandmother, and had no right to happiness. 'Muster' Markham was welcome to the flowers—anybody was welcome to them. If her grandmother died she herself would never be able to bear the sight of Willie's face again.

And her grandmother would die. That morning the doctor had not absolutely said so, but he had shaken his head, and looked very grave. Being pressed for an answer, he had said he must see his old friend again in the evening before he could give a decided opinion.

'That means she'll very soon get her releasement,' said Susie afterwards. 'That's how doctors do take and tell you their bad news. Not that I put my faith in doctors and their judgments; wise women are a sight better to my thinking.'

'Wise women?'

'Yes, wise women. Women who charm illness away, and say wise words over sick folk. I've known old Molly Maddison fetch many a body round that had been given up by the doctors.'

Avice turned pale, for if Susie had begun to talk in this way all hope was over, and she, Avice, was a murderer.

All through the long hot afternoon the old woman lay burning with fever and sunk in stupor, and all the while the brass band in 'Clifford's' park played gay dance-music, and the sun sparkled on the wistaria which brushed against the cottage windows. The doctor came at seven and felt his patient's pulse, and told Avice that he was glad she had Mrs. Batson with her, for she was an experienced woman who knew what had to be done in such cases, and would be a help and a comfort to her if there was any great change; then he carefully brushed his glossy hat on the sleeve of his coat and went his way.

'That means she's near her end!' said Susie in the sick room. Even if their houses admitted of private conversation, reti-

cence on such subjects is not thought desirable by many village folk.

The two sat almost in silence for many hours. Sometimes Mrs. Walton took a little water, but she never opened her eyes. Towards dawn Avice said, 'I can't bear this. That doctor's done her no good at all! I've a great mind to go and fetch Molly Maddison.'

'Wise women don't come to folks' houses, they only tell them what to do.'

'That's what I want to know. We seem to do nothing but sit here and let her die! I'll go! I must!'

'You'll have to cross Molly's hand with silver if you do, and what's the use of that when I can tell you every word she'll say? Besides, you couldn't rouse her up till five or six, and that would mak' it too late to do what she'll tell you till dusk to-morrow night, and if I tell you, you could do it at dawn.'

'What is it, then? Tell me quickly; you ought to have told me before! Surely you might have seen I was half broken-hearted?'

'There's many don't like witching,' said Susie humbly. 'What you do when anyone who is dying has to be cured, is to go and fetch unspoken water. You tak' a pitcher, and get some water that flows under a bridge over which living folk walk, and dead folk are borne. You mun gan for 't owther at dawn o' day or dusk of even. You mun nowther speak on t' way there, nor on t' way back, no matter what you see or hear, nor how you're tempted, or t' water will loss all its vartue and vally. You mun bring it here into this room, and put it to your Granny's lips, and let her sup three mouthfuls on't. You munnot speak till she has done that, no more mun I, nor she. If any word is spokken by any one on us, t' water will do her no good; but if she gets it supped down safely, she'll be a whole woman, that's sure.'

'I'll go! I'll go!' exclaimed Avice, 'but why have you kept all this to yourself?' Even while she spoke, dawn was drawing near. She hastily threw a shawl over her head, took a pitcher, and said, 'Don't speak to me when I come back, Susie; poor Granny won't, I know.'

'Don't you yourself speak. The way is lonesome, and there's no knowing how you may be scared and tempted to skrike out. Keep your lips tight shut, and God bless your going out and your coming in.'

The bridge to which Avice was bound was at the far end of the straggling village. She was so bent on accomplishing her

errand successfully that she neither looked to the right nor to left, lest any unusual sight should startle her into speech. Everything seemed grey and strange, and her loneliness oppressed her. Not a chimney smoked, not a door was open or unbarred. Farmer Hope's fierce dog was shut up in the yard. Farmer Johnson's turkey-cock, which was the dread of her life, was out of the way. Pray Heaven that both might continue to be so when she returned; if not, how hard it would be to refrain from cries for help. She felt as if every dark corner was occupied by a murderous tramp, but hurried on resolutely notwithstanding. Dawn must be near, for the birds were beginning to pipe loudly. She passed the churchyard with a shudder, for if she failed in her task, her poor old grandmother might in a day or two be hidden away there for ever out of sight. Just as tears were streaming down her cheeks at the thought of this, she chanced to look up at the church spire, and there she saw the weathercock glistening with faint pencillings of gold. The sun must be even now peeping above the horizon, and the weathercock on high was catching the first glimpse of it.

She hurried onwards to the bridge, but how was she to get any of the water from beneath it? for on both sides of the stream gardens ran down to it—gardens belonging to large houses, whose owners probably kept fierce dogs.

The first she came to was the Hall where Markham worked, and as time was now precious she opened the large gate and went boldly down the drive till she came to a walk which took her to the water's edge by the bridge, beneath which she quickly filled her pitcher and turned to go home. Just as she reached the gate she heard footsteps in the road. 'Even if it's "Clifford" himself, mad with anger against me, he'll not get a word from me,' was her thought, but as soon as she was back in the road she saw that it was her Willie. He looked pale and ill, and had a stout stick in one hand and a bag in the other. This was an overpowering temptation to speak which she had assuredly not taken into account, and most fervently she prayed for help to resist it.

'You here at this time!' said Willie severely. 'Not that you haven't a right to come to where Muster Markham is working at any time you like, if you're engaged to him.'

'I didn't come to speak to him and I am not engaged to him!' trembled on Avice's lips, but did not shape itself into words; and tears rose to her eyes, because she could not explain why she was there.

'I never thought to set eyes on you no more,' he said, half crying himself, 'and when I do you won't speak to me.'

Not speak to him! She would soon show him how false and unjust that was, and instantly went close to him and held up her pale lips to be kissed. But he started back, exclaiming, 'You don't suppose that I care for an odd kiss, now and then, that's stolen from Markham! It's all or nothing, that I want. Which is it to be? Speak!'

She put a finger on her lips in token that she must not speak—then she pointed to the water, hoping he might understand.

'Oh, you have to be still as water, have you? Then Markham's somewhere within hearing, I suppose; but I'm not afeard of him!'

She shook her head, and again put her finger to her lips.

'I understand. You have given in to your grandmother, now she's ill, and have promised never to speak to me no more. So they've let you out on an errand just for once, Avice, and you like errands to Muster Markham.'

Avice longed to shake her head once more, to show, if possible, how untrue this was, but her grandmother's life and her own peace of mind for the rest of her days were at stake, and greatly she feared that if she continued to make signs of this kind they would be regarded by the invisible powers whose aid she was seeking as equivalent to speech itself.

'Oh, I understand all you don't like for to tell me,' said Willie mournfully. 'I knew about it directly I saw Muster Markham flaunting about yesterday at the flower-show with all your bonnie lilac carnations stuck in the breast of his coat. He tell't me they were a present from you and I didn't believe him; but when I walked by your garden they were all gone, so I saw it was true, and your keeping away from our meeting-place for ten days and more showed me your grandmother had got her way, so I had nought to do but make up my mind to loss you. I've loved you ever since I was a lad at school, Avice, and you will not even speak to me now when speaking only means saying good-bye for ever.'

His eyes were filled with tears; he wrung her hand, and she saw that he was going. What did that black bag mean? She all but put a finger inquiringly on it in the hope of drawing forth some explanation, but remembered what she was doing in time, and checked herself.

'You might have told me you were going to give me up, Avice; it was cruel not to do as much as that! Well, I couldn't help seeing him wear the flowers you had promised to me, but I can

help seeing him walking about with you as his sweetheart and wife. I am not going to stop here to do that! I'm off by the next steamer to my brother in Canada. 'Good-bye! Some lasses are easily overpersuaded, and it seems as you are one of them, but I'll never let mysel' think unkindly of you. Good-bye! It's good-bye for ever and ever, for I'll not come back no more, so you may open your lips to say good-bye, though you have promised not to speak to me.'

Avice stood gazing at him. Not a word of what he had said had been intelligible to her after that terrible word 'Canada' had been spoken, and the presence of that black bag explained. Canada was as bad as death. All her strength had seemed to be leaving her at its name; but while she was struggling to keep her feet, some of the water she was carrying had splashed on them, and this had partly brought her back to her senses. With one hand she held the pitcher tightly to her side, with the other she clutched Willie's arm and tried to draw him home with her. If she could but do that and keep him there till the water had been given and taken, then she might speak.

'What's the use of crying and carrying on like that, if it's Markham that you mean to wed? I'll stay and only be too glad, if you'll say it's me. Say but the word, and never, no, never in this world will I leave you! Come honey, speak; one word will do it. I'll count up to three, and if you don't speak afore "three" is said I'll know what I have got to do. One . . . Two . . . Three!' And at the word 'three' he wrung her hand, and strode away without looking back once.

MARGARET HUNT.



## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

CONCERNING the notes on Mr. Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, published in the last *Ship*, Mr. Courthope sends me the enclosed remarks.

\* \* \*

'My friend, Mr. Andrew Lang, kindly allows me to send a note with reference to some remarks of his in the last number of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE on my *History of English Poetry*, which are apparently founded on a misconception of my meaning.

'Perhaps he will let me make use of the opportunity first to return thanks to my numerous critics for the generous encouragement they have given me in what is at least a difficult and laborious task; and then to say a few words about a tendency which seems to prevail among some of them, and by which he himself has been more or less influenced, but against which I think I have a right, in justice to myself, to utter a mild protest. I have been very careful in the first paragraph of my *History* to explain the nature of my subject and to define its limits. I think, therefore, that it is the duty of all those who criticise the book to bear in mind its announced scheme, and not merely to look at it from their own point of view. Many of them have not observed this condition.

'For example, a very generously disposed critic in the *Athenæum* blames me for not beginning the history of English literature with the poetry of Cædmon. But I have announced in my first paragraph that my subject is the history of the *art* of English poetry from the time of Chaucer. I have selected this starting-point because it is in the age of Chaucer that we first find anything like an artistic treatment of poetical subjects, in the metres which are still in use, and in language *intelligible to the general reader*. Before Chaucer's time we have to use a dictionary, as if we were learning a foreign language, and I do not think it possible to trace the continuity of the *art* methodically from this primitive stage. In saying this, of course I do not mean, and my *History* shows that I do not mean, that the English language, as we use it, is not derived directly from the Anglo-Saxon.

'Again, Mr. Lang seems to think that, in order to be an adequate historian of the subject, I ought to show myself an infallible guide on matters of folklore, philology, anthropology—

possibly even anthropophagy. It is needless to say I have no pretensions whatever to speak as an authority on these questions, but I venture to think the history of the art of English poetry can be traced without the omniscience Mr. Lang demands. Folk-lore, and much other antiquarian knowledge, illustrate the sources of English poetry, but they are not of the essence of my subject—viz. the progress of the art of English poetry from the time of Chaucer. The duty of the historian is to form the best opinion he can on the nature and origin of the elements that make up the poetry of Chaucer; but if his historical structure is to have any unity, it must be built on the lines which he has himself conceived and defined.

‘Other critics, again, have complained that I have not done justice to some of their own favourite poets, such as Dunbar. Perhaps I have not. But here, again, I would ask all readers to remember that mine is a history of the *art* of English poetry, and that I have announced my intention of judging the merits of individual poets according to my own conception of the progress of the art.

‘So much for the scheme of my *History*. Now as regards Mr. Lang’s particular misconception. This relates to an opinion I have expressed about the use of genealogical matters in *Beowulf*. I have said that “nothing can be more *careless and casual* than the references to the heroic exploits, the family relationships, and the tribal feuds” in this poem. Mr. Lang supposes me to mean that the poet of *Beowulf* is *inaccurate* in his genealogies, and, on that assumption, he says that I am not only inconsistent with myself (because I afterwards say that these genealogical references have probably “a firm basis of fact”), but that I also do an injury to the character of Homer, who is quite accurate in his genealogical statements.

‘Now I think that, if Mr. Lang will refer again to the passage in my *History* which he cites, he will see from the context that I use the words, “careless and casual,” as meaning simply “unmethodical.” I am trying to prove that *Beowulf* is, fundamentally, the work of a minstrel, not of a literary poet; and I argue that a literary poet, if he introduced genealogical references at all, would have been likely to do so in a much more formal and systematic manner than is the case in *Beowulf*, the author of which poem doubtless knew that he was dealing with matters familiar to his hearers as well as to himself, and so introduced them *casually*.

‘Clearly this is not inconsistent either with what is said after-

wards about the historical value of the genealogies in *Beowulf*, or with what Mr. Lang says about the genealogies in Homer.

'W. J. COURTHOPE.'

I owe Mr. Courthope satisfaction in regard to 'careless and casual.' But I conceived that I had 'hedged' as to the construction which he puts on these words. As a rule they are pretty nearly synonymous with 'inaccurate'; however, Mr. Courthope meant them as equivalent to 'unmethodical,' and, indeed, we do not expect any poet to write pedigrees in the manner of *Burke's Peerage*. So that part of the question is a matter of mere words, on which I should have been more careful.

I do not want to take an unfair advantage of the editorial 'last word,' so, as to the rest, I merely observe that, when I desired encyclopædic learning in a historian of English literature, I never expected to get it! I only expressed an ideal. But, as to knowledge of folklore, and its use to a literary historian, I do think it essential, at least to a student of early literary periods. The relations between the popular genius, in *Volkstlieder* and *Märchen*, on one side, and accomplished literary art, epic, lyric, dramatic, on the other, deserve careful and adequate study. Mr. Courthope's whole theory on these matters, as set forth in his pages on 'The Decline of Minstrelsy,' appears to me to be a theory which very few students of the popular culture of Europe can now accept. The mass of French and English opinion is certainly opposed to his views; at least on some important points. Again, on the Celtic problem, Mr. Courthope's ideas could not but be modified, I fancy, by the study of ancient MSS. of Irish popular and heroic tales, which are folklore. Readers of Mr. Alfred Nutt's work on *The Holy Grail* have an excellent instance before them of folklore applied to literary history. In this matter we have on our side the great authority of Aristotle in his *Poetics*, and of Horace in the *Ars Poetica*. 'Poetry began in improvisation,' Aristotle says—that is, in the naïf outburst of the popular genius. A very interesting book might be written on the evolution of literature from this point, on the action and interaction of professional and popular poetry and romance. The writer would certainly need to be an anthropologist. And, though Mr. Courthope's book has another scope and aim, yet he finds himself compelled to touch on the subjects which I have indicated. In his occasional remarks he shows, I venture to think, no great

knowledge of the topic, though of course I may be prejudiced by difference of opinion. In such a book as Mr. Courthope's only two or three pages on these points were needed. But to write even these two or three pages perfectly, considerable study of themes rather obscure and remote was required. Again, in order to write adequately four pages on what the Americans would call 'the Celtic side-show,' an historian should have made himself familiar with the books and even with the scattered essays of the most recent Celtic scholars. In Celtic studies great advance has undeniably been made in the last twenty years, and with this advance the general historian of our literature ought to keep abreast. Thus I seem to be falling back on my original impossible ideal of an historian endowed with encyclopædic perfection. In literary history it is necessary to read many books, of which the sole fruit may be the absence of an erroneous sentence or two. 'Hard, hard, hard it is, only not to stumble'; and we actually need to know even the matter about which it is our intention *not* to write. And, of course, it is impossible to satisfy critics; while one has regretted that Mr. Courthope's *History* begins so late, another finds fault with him because it begins so early!

\* \* \*

A point of interest on which Mr. Courthope and I differ is the relative amount of the debt of popular to artistic and of artistic to popular poetry and romance. When ballads were rediscovered by Percy, and revived by Scott, the Grimms, Bürger, Goethe, and others, critics very naturally opposed the charm and power of popular literature to the expiring artificialities of the school of Pope. The ideas of Rousseau about 'a return to Nature' were in the air, and literary criticism regarded ballads as poems in that state so blessed (according to Mr. Squeers) 'the state of Nature.' Then came Wordsworth's theory of simplicity, of unconventionality, and, behold, we have the old ballad-makers installed as Professors of Poetry. Now the ballad (like all art) is *not* in 'a state of Nature,' if by a 'state of Nature' is meant a perfect freedom from rules, from conventions. The ballad is a notoriously conventional kind of poem, only its conventions are very unlike those of Pope and his mechanical imitators.

\* \* \*

On that point Mr. Courthope and I, and every one, are agreed. But I cannot follow him when, to be brief, he reasons (if I understand him) that romantic ballads are all, or nearly all, founded on the data of old literary romances. That some ballads,

especially English ballads, are versified popular degradations of literary romances, I am prepared to admit. That all romantic ballads, as *Tamlane*, *Clerk Saunders*, *The Bonny Hind*, *The Wife of Usher's Well*, are based on literary romances I know no evidence to prove.

\* \* \*

The truth is that there is a come and go, a *va-et-vient*, or running debtor and creditor account between the popular and the artistic genius. The people supply, as Aristotle knew, the first germs of *form*, in improvisations for the lyric, in festal sports for the drama, in the *Fescennina licentia*, as Horace notes, for satire. We may add the magical chants, and the chants (of purpose magical) for the various labours of man and the changing seasons of the year. The rude early measures of folklore were modified and improved by professional bards or minstrels. So much for form.

\* \* \*

As to matter, the folk supplied all the old *Märchen*, scattered about the whole world, ancient and modern, while these *Märchen* were taken up and done into epics by professional literary poets. The *fabliaux*, and many of the romances of the Middle Ages, are built up on popular data, on folklore tales. Thus the debt of the literary to the popular genius is enormous. The folk, again, in its turn takes back a literary romance from the written book, perhaps, and reduces it to ballad rhyme. Here the folk, very probably, is merely recovering its own. But the ballad (where a literary romance and a popular poem have the same theme) *may* have been made, at first hand, on the popular *donnée* which the romance writer also employed. Nobody will say, in another field, that the rural fairy tales of France are all taken from Charles Perrault. On the other hand, Perrault took his tales from the people, from the lips of old nurses, and refined them. The people may accept one of his literary versions, or may cleave to its old original tradition.

\* \* \*

A folklorist follows this *va-et-vient* of literary forms and of matter for romance, and he does not usually agree with Mr. Courthope's theory of the restricted and second-hand character of the popular genius. To that genius the wearied literary talent returns, as Hera yearly renewed her maidenhood in the fountain of Argos. Thus Theocritus goes to the people for his amœbean dialogues in verse; and Scott and Coleridge are bathed in the

fairy well of old popular ballads. This, at least, is the prevalent view among folklorists; and if Mr. Courthope had made the lowly themes his study, I fancy that a few sentences in his book would be written otherwise than as they are. Really the whole problem is at least as important as any problem of literature can be, and that is why my ideal historian of English literature is to be 'an Admiral Crichton,' as an American lady was good enough lately to call the present scribe.

\* \*

May I recommend, to lovers of poetry, Mr. Robert Bridges's excellent treatise *An Essay on Keats* (Lawrence & Bullen)? It is easy to gush over Keats; to give a clear and original account of his aims and methods is a very different task. *Endymion*, for example, seems to a superficial reader as aimless and unmethodical as *Alice in Wonderland*. 'It is a severe task to keep the attention fixed.' Keats is said to have revelled in *The Faery Queen* like a young horse rolling and ramping in a meadow. In *Endymion* he certainly ramps and rolls on the luxuriant flowery herbage of the Muse's mead. Most of us notice no more, but Mr. Bridges, catching the fine end of a clue of allegory, makes even *Endymion* significant and systematic. Even in Keats's own mind the allegory may have been 'a thing subconscious and subliminal,' but Mr. Bridges's interpretation adds dignity and coherence to a poem which, as usually read, is in much need of both. The other poems, notably *Hyperion*, are illuminated by Mr. Bridges in the same convincing manner. One would gladly see this remarkable study in its proper place, as the Introduction to Keats's collected poems. The human character of Keats, with its rapid development, and the consequent or parallel development of his poetic genius, have probably never been so ingeniously and sympathetically described. The essay is so closely written, so full of matter, that here one cannot deal with it in detail, and I must content myself with recommending it to lovers of poetry '... a little clan,' and to critics of poetry, that they may learn, as it were, to 'burn with a hard gemlike flame' for what is great and immortal; and not to be effusive over what is petty, even if it be contemporary.

\* \*

It is quite a long time since I told a ghost story here. 'I have been steady for months,' but now, in the gloaming, writing in the Haunted Chamber of — Castle, I must be a little spookish. The chamber, by the way, is now the smoking-room, and spirits only appear late in the evening. But this is frivolous;



to my story! It is not really a ghost story, only psychical. Every occultist knows that objects are mysteriously brought to *séances* through stone walls. These objects are technically named *apports*. Of course, as there are *apports*, or imports, there must be *dépôts*, or exports. How the thing is managed I don't know; 'grant to the spirits powers of molecular selection' and (granting the spirits) it is easy. But I am more inclined to believe that the medium conceals the *apports* about his person, and plays them as he finds opportunity.

\* \* \*

My tale is not about an *apport* but a *déport*. There were once two aged sisters, in one of whom old age had developed a slight whimsey of picking up and concealing trifles. She was a prowling, acquisitive old body. This poor lady had an accident with fire, and died in a few days, during which her less amiable oddities disappeared. After her death a lady took a photograph of her grave-stone, and, accompanied by a girl of her friends, carried two mounted copies of the piece to the surviving sister. Both copies were in the sister's hands, when the photographer said, 'If poor Miss X. were alive, she would be jealous of my giving you both the photographs.' 'Where is the other?' asked the sister. One copy *had vanished as they spoke*, and, though a most minute search was made, because of the singularity of the circumstance, that deputed photograph has never been recovered. Apparently the Mr. Hyde, so to speak, of old Miss X. was still playing its former tricks, by dint, no doubt, of molecular selection. These disappearances of things are very common in China, says Dr. Nevius, in his work on *Demoniacal Possession in China*. But a lady who knew Dr. Nevius, and knows the Chinese, tells me that she prefers a hypothesis in which the molecules selected may be as big as a watch, a half-crown, or any other article of portable property.

\* \* \*

Professor D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (junior) has kindly sent me an essay on 'Bird and Beast in Ancient Symbolism.' His theory is that beasts and birds on Greek coins represent not only these creatures, but the stars named after them, and that they correspond to 'the positions relative to one another of the heavenly bodies, and in some cases to the configuration of the sky at critical periods of the year, or at the festival seasons of the cities to which the coins belong.' For example, we often find the bull and lion together in ancient art. Why? Well, we often

find them together in Homer, because the lion was always going for the cattle. Perhaps we need look no further for an explanation of the animals in art. But Mr. Thompson turns aside to rend persons who, 'running folklore to the death, seek to read antiquity in the light of savagery.' Such persons would be very likely to explain animals on Greek coins as a survival of totemism and animal worship. You have (1) a totem tribe wearing its totem as a badge; this is common in all parts of the savage world. Then (2) the tribe, becoming civilised, keeps its old badge, and stamps it on local coins centuries after totemism is forgotten. This might easily occur, but to prove that it did actually occur would need convergent evidence of various kinds in each individual case. That analogous causes produced the local animal-worships of civilised Egypt is now pretty generally admitted, even by Egyptologists.

\* \* \*

Mr. Thompson argues 'we must see fallacy in every theory which treats as nascent and primitive the civilisation of a period of exalted poetry, the offspring of ages of antecedent culture.' Certainly we must, but the most civilised ages may, and do, retain survivals from extremely remote periods of barbarism. A Greek tribe might be totemistic and savage in 4000 B.C., civilised, and, in religion, of the Olympic faith, in 600 B.C. Yet the civilisation of 600 B.C. might retain on its coins the badge which the barbarism of 4000 B.C. tattooed on its bare body. Why have the stars bestial names in Greece at all? Well, they have similar names among Australian blacks. The Greeks are not to be reckoned uncivilised because they retained stellar names first given in the savage condition of life. We may (if we find grounds for doing so) regard the beasts on Greek coins as survivals of totemism, without impugning the civilisation of coin-making Greece. The Athenian Thesmophoria and the Eleusinia had the closest parallels among the Pawnees, not because the Athenians of the Periclean Age were like the Pawnees, but because they retained religious institutions from an age when their remote ancestors were on the Pawnee level. All this seems obvious enough when once we grasp the meaning of the word 'survival.' But I am not maintaining that the beasts on the coins are descended from totems, only that, if any of them are, the fact is not inconsistent with a high civilisation.

ANDREW LANG.

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Anon. (Hadleigh), a parcel of clothing.

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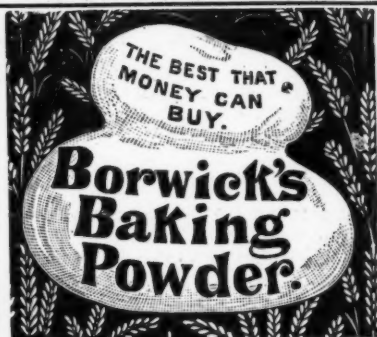
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